

THE  
ESSENCE OF BUDDHISM

BY  
P. LAKSHMI NARASU

---

THIRD EDITION  
*Revised & Enlarged*

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WITH A PREFACE  
BY  
B. R. AMBEDKAR

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*Namaṣṣākyamunaye thathāgatāya, arhate, samyak sambuddhāya.*

WITH bowed head I salute Him who is  
The dispeller of the gloom of ignorance,  
The guide compassionate to the Perfect Life.  
The flower of mankind, the master incomparable,  
The lord of sages, the saviour of the world,  
Lord Buddha—as Prince Siddartha born.

Bright shineth the sun in his splendour by day  
And bright the moon's radiance by night ;  
Bright shineth the hero in battle array,  
And the sage in his thought shineth bright ;  
But by day and by night, none so glorious so bright  
As Bhagavat, the source of all spiritual light.

—DHAMMAPADA, 387.

THERE is one alone unchanging,  
From whose face the darkness flies.  
High-born, luminously beaming,  
Uncompared, beyond compare—  
Bhagavat, the far-seeing,  
Bhagavat, the very wise.—PARAYANA SUTTA.

THERE is nowhere in all the world  
That his reason has not been ;  
Not a fact whereof the Master  
Has not pierced the origin.  
He will end the doubter's questions,  
If they will but let him in.—*Ibid.*



## DEDICATED TO

ALL whose hearts are vast like the sea  
And full of compassion and love ;  
Whose thoughts, like the sweet Philomel,  
Soar high and lofty for ever ;  
Who, regardless of consequences,  
Use their reason to distinguish  
What is true from what is untrue ;  
Who would rather homeless roam  
Where freedom and virtue may lead  
Than live a slave in ease at home  
Crouching to superstition and vice ;  
Who, strenuous in the Holy Path,  
Seek them that wisdom has made free ;  
Who work with zeal to share with all  
The easy path of salvation,  
Revealed by Him who read aright  
The problem of origination.



## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

THE author of this book was Prof. P. Lakshmi Narasu. While I have great pleasure in introducing this book to the public I confess that I had not met the author and know very little about his personal life. I have tried to obtain whatever details that could be gathered about his personal life and literary work. For this purpose, I have found Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya to be the best source. He knew Prof. Narasu personally and was a friend of his. I give below the main facts in the life of Prof. Narasu as given to me by Dr. Pattabhi.

Prof. P. Lakshmi Narasu, B.A., was a prodigy of the last century. He was a graduate in Physics from the Madras Christian College. From being a tutor and demonstrator, he rose to the position of an Assistant Professor by 1897 and was given full charge of Physics and Chemistry for the B.A. classes in 1898-99, during the absence of Prof. Moffatt, the permanent Professor of Physics on leave. Prof. Moffatt was a raw youth who was appointed to the professorship over the head of Prof. Narasu who had already won his distinction in Physics in the sphere of wireless telegraphy—which in the nineties of the last century was as yet in its infant stage of progress. During the years 1898 and 1899, Prof. Narasu, as he used to be called in those days, was already an Examiner in Physics and Chemistry—both for B.A. and M.A. Examinations. Prof. Narasu was particularly strong in Dynamics. Once when an altercation arose over the correctness of a question in Dynamics, Prof. Wilson, a hot-headed Englishman who was Professor of Chemistry in the Presidency College, Madras, and Chairman of the Board of Examiners in Physics and Chemistry, questioned the correctness of the view expressed by Prof. Narasu regarding some problem in Dynamics. Prof. Narasu took up the challenge at once. ‘Do you want to teach me, Mr. Narasu?’ asked the arrogant Wilson to which in reply Prof. Narasu retorted—after working out the problem—‘I am glad I am teaching Prof. Wilson something in Dynamics.’ The incident is of interest to us fifty years after its occurrence, because it shows that Prof. Narasu was an Iconoclast. Prof. Narasu was a Social Reformer. He fought caste to the best of his ability and raised the standard of Revolt against its tyranny in Hinduism, so early as in the nineties of the 18th century. He

was a great admirer of Buddhism and gave courses of lectures on the subject week in and week out. He was highly popular with his students over whom he exercised a magical personal influence so as to broaden their outlook and widen their visions. His sense of self-respect, both personal and national was of a high order and he did not stand the arrogance and sense of self-superiority of his European colleagues to whom he was always ready to give their due in the domain of scholarship but at whose hands he would not take insults lying down.

Prof. Narasu's eminence as an Educationist did not take long to obtain general and widespread recognition and ere long he was promoted to the Principalship of the Pachappa's College.

Prof. Narasu was a highly public-spirited citizen and took active part in the organization of a body known as the 'National Fund and Industrial Association' under whose auspices, petty donations were being collected with which aid was rendered to students who desired to go abroad for advanced technical education. Japan was the country which attracted the young man of the day and it was their ambition to learn the technique of various small industries and manufactures—notably—soap making, enamelling and paints manufacture and so on. But the Professor's one sin was social reform and in Buddhism he found his solace. He was one of the earliest to discern the evils of the caste system, early marriages and prohibition of widow marriage and it was then considered in Reform Circles a matter for gratification that one of his brothers was a practical Social Reformer, having married a widow. That was the era when Christian Missionaries were not only countenancing the social reform movement but viewed it with high favour as marking a half-way house between orthodox Hinduism and conversion to Christianity. It did not take long for them to change their views and look upon such progressive movements as constituting a real hindrance to proselytization. Prof. Narasu was the stalwart of the 19th century who had fought European arrogance with patriotic fervour, orthodox Hinduism with iconoclastic zeal, heterodox Brahmins with nationalistic vision and aggressive Christianity with a rationalistic outlook—all under the inspiring banner of his unflagging faith in the teachings of the Great Buddha.

In recent times many people from different parts of India have been asking me to recommend a good book on Buddhism.

In responding to their wishes, I felt no hesitation in suggesting Prof. Narasu's book. For, I think that it is the best book on Buddhism that has appeared so far. Unfortunately, the book has been out of print for a long time. I, therefore, decided to reprint it so that the desire of those who have an interest in the teachings of Buddhism may have in their hand a text which is complete in its treatment and lucid in its exposition. I must thank the representatives of the old firm of Varadachari & Co., Madras, who held the copyright of the original publication for permission to reprint the book.

In writing this foreword to this reprint, it was my intention to deal with some of the criticisms which have been levelled against the teachings of Buddha by his adversaries—past and present. I have given up that intention for two reasons. In the first place, my health will not permit me to engage myself in this task. Secondly, I am myself working on a Life of Buddha and I think that I could deal with this matter better in my own work wherein I could do more justice to it than in a foreword to another man's work. I have taken this decision more especially because I am sure that the reader of Prof. Narasu's book will not suffer in any way as a result of my decision.

“RAJ GRAHA,”

HINDU COLONY, DADAR, BOMBAY 14.

*10th March 1948.*

B. R. AMBEDKAR

## PREFACE

“THIS volume is the final form assumed by a series of essays on Buddhist subjects originally contributed to certain South Indian magazines. It has been prepared with the aim of bringing together, within a small compass, the leading ideas of Buddhism, and interpreting them in the light of modern knowledge. It lays no claim to originality. Much of the material it contains may be found in the works of well-known orientalists. Nor does it pretend to be the fruit of Pali or Sanskrit scholarship, despite the quotations it may contain from works in those languages. It professes to be nothing more than the humble offering of a disciple in the service of his Master.

“In presenting the teachings of his master it is incumbent on the disciple never to lose sight of the fundamental principles on which those teachings themselves rest. For the Buddha the voice of authority is in truth itself, and wherever the truth leads, thither the disciple must follow. Accordingly, the dictum accepted in all schools of Buddhism as the sole regulative principle is that nothing can be the teaching of the Master, which is not in strict accord with reason, or with what is known to be true. In giving a conspectus of their religion all Buddhist writers of note have sought the aid of logic and psychology. Their regard for the general validity of ideas has been so great that they have not infrequently set aside the *Sutras*, which are commonly regarded as the basis of their religion. Hence, in expounding Buddhism in the light of modern knowledge, the author has in no way swerved from his position as a Buddhist, but has only followed a practice current among the Buddhists from the very earliest times. If he has succeeded in giving Buddhism the aspect of modernity, he has done so, not by seasoning modern ideas with a little Buddhistic sauce, but by getting beneath all forms of Buddhism and bringing to light the essential truths therein contained.

“The attention of thoughtful men in Europe and America has been drawn to Buddhism. Already there are in those countries organizations for the spread of Buddhism. A branch of the Mahabodhi Society with its headquarters in Chicago is doing valuable work in the United States. A Japanese Buddhistic Mission, established in San Francisco, publishes a journal, called



*The Light of Dharma*, which is said to be widely read in America. A Buddhistic Society, established in Leipzig, besides publishing a journal, called *Der Buddhist* (now *Buddhistische Warte*), is actively at work in disseminating the teachings of the Tathāgata by means of popular lectures and cheap literature. Divested of certain mystical out-growths, Buddhism will doubtless attract many occidentals. Nevertheless it has been asserted that Buddhism is too chaste to win adherents where marriage is not considered detrimental to high thinking. But even on this score Buddhism has nothing to fear. There have been from the earliest times schools of Buddhism that have maintained that a laic also can attain arhatship. A religion that is supple enough to include the *Vajrachāryas* of Nepal as well as the *Sthaviras* of Ceylon has certainly room in it for puritanical asceticism as well as the innocent pleasures of a conjugal life.

“The possibility of a revival of Buddhism in India has been presaged by an eminent historian. With the spread of education and independent thought it is not unlikely that the Dharma will appeal to that growing circle of thoughtful Indians, who no longer find any charm in Rama or Rahim, Krishna or Christ, Kali or Lakshmi, Mari or Mary. Nor are signs wanting which betoken a lasting interest in the teachings of one whom all India once revered as born to take upon himself the sins of all mankind. As the true *swadeśi* spirit takes firmer root and grows, the immortal name of Sākyamuni, which now lurks in the garbled story of the Buddhāvatār, is sure to rise above the surface of oblivion, and shine in all its eternal glory and grandeur.

“The marrow of civilized society, it has been truly said, is ethical and not metaphysical. The forces that underlie and maintain civilized society are not the belief in *ātman* and *brahman*, or trinity in unity, or the immanence and transcendence of God, but truthfulness, charity, justice, tolerance, fraternity—in short, all that is summed up in the word Dharma or Buddhism. Rightly did Emperor Asoka make Buddhism the basis of his government. Not till the “white light” of the Buddha has once again penetrated into the thought and life of the Indians can they hope to regain that pre-eminence among nations that they possessed in the time of Asoka. Not till the *Dharma* becomes the guiding spirit of all nations will their peace and safety be assured. It might be pretentious for the author to hope that this book will prove serviceable in hastening this consummation so devoutly wished. But he cherishes the hope that his book will in some

measure be helpful in leading to a clearer understanding of the teachings of his Master.”

So much of the original preface I may, perhaps, be pardoned for quoting ; both because I have found no new way of describing my aims and my hopes and because the favourable reception of the last edition in India and other countries encourages me to believe that the hopes are being fulfilled. Since the publication of the first edition many events have happened which prove the growing interest of all thoughtful men in Buddhism. Of these I need note only the enthusiasm evinced all over India in connection with the unearthing of the relics of the Buddha near Peshawar, the celebration of the Vaishak festival by non-Buddhists, the progress made by the Bengal Buddhist Association, the establishment of the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland, the publication of the *Jagajyoti* (Light of the world) in Bengali and the *Buddhist Review* in English. It would be arrogant to suppose that my book has had any direct influence in bringing about these events, but it is no small consolation to learn from some of those connected with these movements that my book has had a persuasive influence on them.

The plan of this edition remains the same as the original but a good deal of new matter has been added to show that my Buddhist “modernism,” far from being “fabricated with the collaboration of all the scientists of the Old and New Worlds,” stands much closer to the spirit of the Buddha than the Indologist presentation of the teaching of the Benign One. The crucial question for the Buddhist is not whether he shall be *mahāyānik* or *hīnayānik*, but whether Buddhism can come to terms with modern civilization which is animated, not by ideals borrowed from antiquity, but by the awakening spirit of modern science. In the earnest endeavour to answer this question I have overlooked no hint or criticism from friends, reviewers and co-workers in the same field. On the suggestion of some friends a few illustrations of Buddhistic art have been added.

There are many whom I ought to thank for the success of my book and among them pre-eminently stands Mrs. Mary E. Foster, an enthusiastic Buddhist of Honolulu, who by a donation rendered my book accessible to places which it would otherwise have not been able to reach.

MADRAS,  
367, MINT STREET. }  
December 1911.

• P. L. N.

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

	Page
THE HISTORIC BUDDHA . . . . .	1

What Buddhism is—Sākyamuni not a supernatural founder of Buddhism—Incidents in Sākyamuni's life non-essential—Value of Buddha's personality—Birth of Buddha—His early life and renunciation—Training under Arada and Udraka—Severe ascetic penance—The incident with the herdsman's daughter—Attainment of enlightenment—His determination to preach—Starting for Benares and meeting with Ūpaka—Stay at Benares and formation of the holy brotherhood—Visit to Rajagriha and conversion of Bimbisāra—Conversion of Sāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, and Mahā Kāśyapa—Other disciples—Ineffectual plots of Devadatta—Patrons and benefactors of Buddha—State of India then—Calumnies against Buddha and how they were exposed—Daily life of the Blessed One—His method of exposition—His last tour and end—Disposal of the remains of the Blessed One—Historicity of Sākyamuni—His position among founders of religions—His claims to greatness.

## CHAPTER II

THE RATIONALITY OF BUDDHISM . . . . .	23
---------------------------------------	----

A system of philosophy and practical ethics—Reason the ultimate criterion of truth—Futility of authority and revelation—Irrationality of all beliefs—Cultivation of faith—Schools and sects of Buddhism—Only one way, that of reason—Reverence to relics and images an act of devotion—Adaptation to pre-existing religions—Invocation of Amida by the Japanese Buddhist—The *triṣarāṇas*—No transcendental superiority in Buddha—Attitude towards miracles and wonders—Freedom from fanaticism and persecution—The missionary impulse in Buddhism—Spread of Buddhism—Spirit of generosity and compassion—Influence on the development of arts—Development of science and knowledge—Civilizing influence of Buddhism—Buddhism and pessimism—Reason and purity of heart the gist of Buddhism.

## CHAPTER III

THE MORALITY OF BUDDHISM . . . . .	50
------------------------------------	----

The goal of Buddhism—The ten transgressions and ten precepts—The precepts against the destruction of life—Sacrifices in ancient India—Care for animals—Partiality for vegetarian diet—Mixed diet

the best food—Extreme observance of the precept—Attitude towards war—Attitude towards suicide—Spirit of tolerance a result of the observance of the precept—The precept against theft—Motives for such abstinence—Socialistic spirit of Buddhism—The precept against adultery—Sexual excesses denounced by religions—Attitude towards legitimate intercourse—The precept against falsehood—Lying one of the gravest offences—Hypocrisy fostered by churches—Lying under necessity—The precept against drink—Prevalence of drink in Ancient India—Buddhists first to enjoin total abstinence—Nature and effect of alcohol—The six ruinous things, and drink one of them—The precept against vain talk—The precept against evil reports—The precept against selfishness—Jealousy an intense form of selfishness—The precept against evil passions—The demands of justice and equity—Love should be healthy and wise—Duty of practising universal love—Anecdote showing the practice of love—The true import of the Jātakas—Claims of Christianity to be the only religion of love—The Precept against ignorance and doubt—Scepticism a means of knowing the truth—The roots of Buddhism—Difference between the ethical teachings of Buddhism and Brahmanism—Ethics of Buddhism not egoistic—Its ethical system a study of consequences, of Karma and Vipāka—Purely autonomous—Moral ideas have nothing to do with supernatural beings—The Eternal self is not of any ethical value—Morality in the Vedānta and in Buddhism—Basis of morality purely subjective—Buddhism teaches that the good of humanity is the good of the individual—Deliverance from sorrow by following good—Morality rests on egoism and altruism is applied egoism—The ideal of the future perfection of mankind.

## CHAPTER IV

### BUDDHISM AND CASTE

91

Universality of salvation—The story of Buddha's beloved disciple and the girl of the Mātanga caste—The Brahman a specially Indian phenomenon—No support for the existence of specific differences in men—Differences only through occupation and conduct—No difference in Dharma between one caste and another—No caste for those joining the Saṅgha—Social conditions then prevailing uncertain—Only the social significance of castes, if any, recognized in Buddhism—The development of caste due to ambition and selfishness—The attitude of later Buddhists—Arguments of the *Vajrasuchi*: Brahmanhood not constituted by life principle or descent or body or learning or origin from Brahma—Attempts by Brahmans to bolster up their religion, the *Gūta* one of such attempts—Caste the mainstay of Hinduism—Ethnological basis of caste a pure myth—Failure of attempts to classify mankind—Purity of blood mythical—Heredity has nothing to do with ethical culture—Unwarranted supposition of the possibility of development for superior peoples only—Caste quite noxious, and therefore disregarded by Buddhism.

## CHAPTER V

	Page
WOMAN IN BUDDHISM . . . . .	118

Examples of the high status of women in Buddhism—Low estimation of women in India—Buddhist revolt against this a success—Strict rules for the relations between the sexes—Theoretical equality—Treatment of women fair—Example of Burmese women—Marriage ceremony among Buddhists very simple—A religion of free individuals—That the Teaching is destructive of family life is not true.

## CHAPTER VI

THE FOUR GREAT TRUTHS . . . . .	128
---------------------------------	-----

The four truths : existence of misery, its cause, emancipation from misery, and means of emancipation—These truths not dogmas—Existence of misery : Schopenhaur's description thereof—Religion arises from the instinct of self-preservation—Attempts at a perfect life : Buddha's attitude—World-process not all perfected—Evolution in all forms of life—Final stage of self-conscious growth to co-extensiveness with all life.

## CHAPTER VII

BUDDHISM AND ASCETICISM . . . . .	137
-----------------------------------	-----

Religion of ancient India sacrificial—Rise in power of the Brahmins who knew the sacrificial arts—Human sacrifice the greatest—Strong belief in self-mortification, illustrated by Brahmanism and Jainism—Gautama's trial of self-mortification and his discovery of its fruitlessness—Sermon in the Deer Park at Benares—Asceticism and luxury equally spurned by the Dharma—Wealth rarely procures ease of body and mind—Perfect freedom and sanity of life, the attainment of *bodhi*—The charge of indolence against the *bhikshus* false—Invaluable services by the *bhikshus*—Their work in Japan—Wrong allegation of failure to inculcate patriotism—Political teaching illustrated by the government of Asoka—Democratic basis of the Sangha—Utter eradication of egoism and the ideal.

## CHAPTER VIII

BUDDHISM AND PESSIMISM . . . . .	154
----------------------------------	-----

Buddhism not pessimistic—Inward discord of Schopenhaur contrasted with the inward harmonies of Buddhism—Existence of suffering

recognised, but a nobler life opened out—Life is not condemned, but peace must be striven for—Resignation and means of attaining happiness taught—Buddhism not a religion of despair—Duty of furthering evolution with a view to attain perfection.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH . . . . . 161

The middle path, the noble path—Morality of Buddhism represented by the eightfold path—Eight essentials specified—Right belief necessary for right action—Animistic and metaphysical beliefs the sources of religious error—Right action, thought and peace safeguarded by reason and science—Attainment of bodhi directed by right views—Value of actual practice—Purification of one's acts—Observance of moral precepts the practice of morality—Nature of charity—Aim in acts of charity—Right living the outcome of right action—Means of subjective purification—Practice of self-control—Nature of the will, not a faculty determined by itself—Requisites of a rightly directed will—Attainment of the freedom of *bodhi*—Training of the will—Practice of right thought—Intellectual enlightenment essential to salvation—Practice of *Dhyana* for tranquillity—*Dhyana*, not losing consciousness—*Dhyana* and *Yoga* contrasted—*Dhyana* must be coupled with *pragna*—The ten impediments; permanent self and scepticism two of them—Efficacy of ceremonies and rites the third—The remaining seven impediments—Elaboration of the *Aṣṭāṅgamārga* into the *Daṣaḥumi*—Falsity of the accusation against the greater importance in Buddhism of intellectual powers than ethical virtues.

## CHAPTER X

### THE RIDDLE OF THE WORLD . . . . . 187

Everything in a state of flux—Cause and effect—Causal nexus—No first cause—Idea of *Isvara* falsified by rational argument—Natural laws only descriptive—Argument of purpose fallacious—No connection between morality and *Isvara*—Morality an outcome of social limitations—General belief in *Isvara* not a proof of his existence—Historical proofs fallacious—Pragmatism and belief in *Isvara*—Existence not a manifestation of the absolute—The Absolute in Hindu systems of thought—The nature of concepts, higher and lower concepts—Methods to reach the transcendental, three classes thereof—Nature of ecstatic intuition, no proof of a 'subliminal self'—Examination of the claim of ecstasy to be unquestioned—Universe not a product of the individual self—Idealistic position examined—Exact position of the Blessed One, a consistent phenomenalist—One's experiences are given him only as a content of one's consciousness—

Memory—Nothing external or internal as contents of consciousness—  
The practical origin of the distinction between 'I' and "external  
world."

## CHAPTER XI

### PERSONALITY ... . . . . 210

Various views of human personality—Belief in a permanent self or  
soul most pernicious—Wrong conception of the unity of compound  
things, the origin of the false belief—Existence of an *atman* categori-  
cally denied by Buddhism; permanence of personality apparent, not  
real—No psychological basis for the existence of an outside experienc-  
ing self, the *atman*—Comparison of the brain to a piano criticised—  
Mutual conditioning of the ego and not-ego—The ego not an eternal  
immutable entity—Criticism of the theory of spontaneity—The  
freedom of the will examined—Division of the contents of conscious-  
ness into two classes, the origin of transcendental entities—Human  
personality a compound of body and mind—Dissolution of individuality  
the source of happiness—Denial of a separate self liberates the in-  
dividual from error.

## CHAPTER XII

### DEATH AND AFTER . . . . . 226

Man a complex of skandhas—Life a union of the skandhas, their  
dissolution death—Consciousness not separable from the organism,  
proved by psychology—Existence of extra-human spirit agencies not  
established by the researches of the Psychical Research Society—  
No evidence of the continuance of the conscious person afforded by  
science—Individual existence a complex of *karmas* which, after  
death, are re-born in others—Transmigration of an actual entity  
from one birth to another not admitted by Buddha, but the content  
of the ego is preserved in others—Evolution of the organized animal  
from its ancestral series—Psychical interdependence of human beings,  
and continuance of psychic life after the individual—Immortality of  
humanity—Our lives incorporated and continued in a collective  
eternity of humanity—Person as well as society, the living embodi-  
ment of past physical and psychical activities—Criticism of the  
Buddhist school believing in a mystery underlying the transmigration  
of *karma*—Self, immanent and not transcendent—The Buddhist  
doctrine of *karma* extends over the whole of phenomenal existence—  
The difference between this doctrine and the Brahmanic theory of  
transmigration—Perfectability by self-culture and self-control,  
hence Buddhism not fatalistic—Dissolution of body and mind, but  
continuance of life in deeds.

## CHAPTER XIII

	Page
THE SUMMUM BONUM . . . . .	247

Three corner-stones of Buddhism—*Anityā*, a perpetual flux—Anitya not necessarily illusory (*mithya*)—*Anātmata*, the non-existence of an absolute, transcendent entity—The ego, not unchangeable, but alterable and improvable—Unity of consciousness not explained by the unity of an underlying *atman*—Renouncement of the *atman*, rids sorrow—*Nirvana* not an absorption in the universal soul—Not also an annihilation of all activities—Negative aspect of Nirvana, the extinction of lust, hatred, and ignorance—Nirvana, not the annihilation of personality, but complete attainment of perfect love and righteousness—The law of Karma is binding even after the attainment of Nirvana, ideals of Arahāt and Jivanmukta compared—Peace, consolation, and hope attained in Buddhism—The true nature of Dharmakaya—Its universality—The origin of sorrow, anxiety and despair—The path of liberation—Freedom from suffering through the light of Dharmakaya—The all-embracing life of one who has attained Nirvana—The beatitude of Nirvana.



# THE ESSENCE OF BUDDHISM

## CHAPTER I

### THE HISTORIC BUDDHA

**B**UDDHISM, or, as it is known among its followers, the Dharma, is the religion preached by the Buddhas. A Buddha is one who has attained *Bodhi*. By Bodhi is meant an ideal state of intellectual and ethical perfection, which can be attained by man by purely human means. Of the many that have attained Bodhi the one best known to history is Gautama Sākyamuni.

Gautama Sākyamuni is generally spoken of as the founder of the Dharma. But Sākyamuni himself refers in his discourses to Buddhas who had preached the same doctrine before him. Nor can we speak of the Buddha as the founder of Buddhism in the same sense as we speak of the founder of Christianity or Mahomedanism. The founder of the former religion is essentially a supernatural being; he is the incarnation of the son of God, who is no other than God himself. No one can call himself a true Christian, who does not accept the divinity of Jesus, and who does not believe that Christ rose from the dead after dying on the cross to take upon himself the sins of all those who believe in him. Mahomed, the founder of the latter religion, though not an incarnation of God or any of his relations or servants, is yet a privileged human being, who was chosen as the special vehicle for the communication of a supernatural revelation to mankind, and no man can call himself a Mahomedan, who does not believe that Mahomed is the prophet of God. But the Buddha nowhere claims to be anything more than a human being. No doubt we find him a full and perfect man. All the same he is a man among men. He does not profess to bring a revelation from a supernatural source. He does not proclaim himself a saviour who will take upon himself the sins of those that follow him. He professes no more than to teach men the way by which they can liberate themselves as he has liberated himself. He distinctly tells us that every one must bear the burden of his own sins, that every man must be the fabricator of his own salvation, that not even a God can do for man what self-help in the form of self-conquest

and self-emancipation can accomplish. We read in the *Dharma-pāda*, a collection of verses attributed to the Blessed Sākyamuni:

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts."

"By oneself evil is done; by oneself one suffers; by oneself evil is left undone; by oneself one is purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself; no one can purify another."

"You yourself must make an effort; the Buddhas are only preachers. The thoughtful who enter the way are freed from the bondage of sin."

"He who does not rouse himself when it is time to rise, who, though young and strong, is full of sloth, whose will and thoughts are weak, that lazy and idle man will never find the way to enlightenment."

"Strenuousness is the path of immortality, sloth the path of death. Those who are strenuous do not die; those who are slothful are as if dead already."

Again in the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* the Buddha gives the following admonition to Ānanda, one of his beloved disciples:

"O Ānanda, be ye lamps unto yourself. Be ye refuges to yourselves. Hold fast to the Dharma as a lamp. Hold fast to the Dharma as a refuge. Look not for refuge to any one beside yourselves."

"And whosoever, Ānanda, either now or after I am dead, shall be a lamp unto themselves and a refuge unto themselves . . . it is they, Ānanda, among the seekers after Bodhi who shall reach the very topmost height."

Not only did the Buddha offer no support to favourable interference from supernatural agencies on behalf of man, not only did he offer no promise of exemption from suffering and sorrow as a reward of simple belief in him, but he went further in admonishing his disciples not to attach importance to his individual personality but to remember always the ideal. It is said in the *Vajracchedikā*: "He who looks for me, *i.e.*; the true Tathāgata, through any material form, or seeks me through any audible sound, that man has entered on an erroneous course, and shall never behold Tathāgata." Similarly in another place we read: "Who say you see me and yet have transgressed the Dharma, are not seen by me, but as though you were distant by ten thousand miles, whereas the man who keeps the Dharma dwells ever in my sight." The same truth is much more impressively brought out in a conversation between the Blessed

One and the Brahman Drona. Once upon a time the latter seeing the Blessed One sitting at the foot of a tree, asked him : "Are you a *deva* ?" And the Exalted One answered : "I am not." "Are you a *gandharva* ?"—"I am not."—"Are you a *yaksha* ?"—"I am not." "Are you a man ?"—"I am not a man." On the Brahman asking what he might be, the Blessed One replied : "Those evil influences, those lusts, whose non-destruction would have individualised me as a *deva*, a *gandharva*, a *yaksha*, or a man I have completely annihilated. Know, therefore, O Brahman, that I am a Buddha." Now the practical lesson of this anecdote is obvious. According to Hindu ideas a *deva*, a *gandharva*, a *yaksha* could assume a human form. It was therefore natural for the Brahman to ask if the being in human form before him was a *deva*, a *gandharva*, or a *yaksha*. But what perplexed the Brahman was that he received a negative answer to each one of his questions, and this led him to his general question. Buddha's answer to it was unequivocal. What was of importance in his eyes was not his form (*rūpa*) but his character (*nāma*), the embodiment in practical life of the ideas of compassion and wisdom summed up in the word Bodhi. He was not only Sākyamuni, but he was also Tathāgata. The eternal truths he taught were nothing but what he himself was in the quintessence of his personality. He was *dharmadhātusvabhāvāmaka*,\* representing in himself the ultimate reality embodied in the society of all human beings. No wonder therefore that the personality that dominates Buddhism is not Sākyamuni but the Buddha.

Though what is of primary importance is the life in accordance with the Dharma, yet the personality of the Great Teacher is not without value. In so far as that personality is the practical embodiment of his teachings, it serves as a model for the disciple to imitate and follow. As the *Amitāyur-dhyāna Sūtra* says : "Since they have meditated on Buddha's body, they will also see Buddha's mind. The Buddha's mind is his absolutely great compassion for all beings." But it must at the same time be remembered that the teaching of the Blessed One does not rest for its validity on any miracle or any special event in his life as is the case in many another religion. Should the events in the life of Gautama Sākyamuni turn out to be unhistorical, that would not in the least detract from the merit of his teachings.

\* "The nature of the Tathāgata is the Dhamma—he is really Dhamma,"  
—Aggañña Sutta,

As the Blessed One himself has said, the teaching carries with it its own demonstration.

Stripped of mythical embellishments, the principal events in the life of Gautama Buddha are easily told. He was born about the middle of the sixth century before the Christian era (563 B.C.) in Lumbinī Park in the neighbourhood of Kapilavastu, now known as Padeira, in the north of the district of Gorakhpur. To mark this spot as the birth of the greatest teacher of mankind and as a token of his reverence for him, Emperor Asoka erected in 239 B.C. a pillar bearing the inscription: "Here was the Enlightened One born."\*

At Kapilavastu resided the chiefs of the Sākya clan, of whom little would have been remembered, had not Siddārtha been born among them. Gautama's father, Suddhodana, and his mother, Māya, the daughter of Suprabuddha, belonged to this clan. The mother of Siddārtha died seven days after his birth. Under the kind care of his maternal aunt, Prajāpati Gautāmi, Siddārtha spent his early years in ease, luxury and culture. No pains were spared to make the course of his life smooth. At the age of sixteen he was married to his cousin, Yasodhara, the daughter of the chief of Koli, and they had a son named Rāhula. For twenty-five years Siddārtha saw only the beautiful and pleasant. About this time the sorrows and sufferings of mankind affected him deeply, and made him reflect on the problem of life. Impelled by a strong desire to find the origin of suffering and sorrow and the means of extirpating them, he renounced at the age of twenty-nine all family ties and retired to the forest, as was the wont in his day.

'T was not through hatred of his children sweet.

'T was not through hatred of his lovely wife,

Thraller of hearts—not that he loved them less—

But Buddhahood more, that he renounced them all.

After this great renunciation (*abhinishkramaṇa*) the Bodhisattva, the seeker after Bodhi, placed himself under the spiritual guidance of two renowned Brahman teachers, Ārāda Kālāma and Udraka Rāmaputra. The former lived at Vaisālī and was the head of a large number of followers. He was evidently a follower of Kapila, the reputed founder of the Sāṅkhya system of philosophy, and laid great stress on the belief in an *ātman*. He regarded the disbelief in the existence of a soul as not tending towards religion.

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\* Hida bhagavam jāteti.

Without the belief in an eternal immaterial soul he could not see any way of salvation. Like the munja grass when freed from its horny case, or like the wild bird when liberated from its trap, the soul, when freed from its material limitations (*upādhi*), would attain perfect release. When the ego discerned its immaterial nature, it would attain true deliverance. This teaching did not satisfy the Bodhisattva, and he quitted Ārāda Kālāma, and placed himself under the tuition of Udraka Rāmaputra. The latter, probably a follower of the Vaiseshika system, also expatiated on the question of "I," but laid greater stress on the effects of Karma and the transmigration of souls. The Bodhisattva saw the truth in the doctrine of Karma, but he could not bring himself to believe in the existence of a soul or its transmigration. He therefore quitted Udraka also, and went to the priests officiating in temples to see if he could learn from them the way of escape from suffering and sorrow. But to the gentle nature of Gautama the unnecessarily cruel sacrifices performed on the altars of the gods were revolting, and he preached to the priests on the futility of atoning for evil deeds by the destruction of life and the impossibility of practising religion by the neglect of the moral life.

Wandering from Vaisālī in search of a better system Siddārtha came to a settlement of five pupils of Udraka, headed by Kaundinya, in the jungle of Uruvilva near Gayā in Magadha. There he saw these five keeping their senses in check, subduing their passions and practising austere penance. He admired their zeal and earnestness, and to give a trial to the means employed by them he applied himself to mortification. For six years he practised the most severe ascetic penances, till his body became shrunken like a withered branch. One day after bathing in the river Nairañjanā (modern Phālgu) he strove to leave the water, but could not rise on account of his weakness. However with the aid of the stooping branch of a tree he raised himself and left the river. But while returning to his abode he again staggered and fell to the ground, and might perhaps have died, had not Sujātā, the eldest daughter of a herdsman living near the jungle, who accidentally passed by the spot where the Bodhisattva had swooned, given him some rice-milk. Having thus refreshed himself he perceived that asceticism, instead of leading him to the goal he sought, brought about only an enfeeblement of both body and mind. Accordingly he gave up all ascetic practices, and paying due attention to the needs of the body he entered upon a course of reflection and self-examination, trusting to his

own reason, the light which each one of us carries within himself to attain the truth.

“ Truth is within ourselves : it takes no rise  
 From outward things, whate’er you may believe.  
 There is an inmost centre in us all,  
 Where truth abides in fulness ; and around,  
 Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,  
 This perfect clear perception—which is truth.  
 A baffling and perverting carnal mesh  
 Binds it and makes all error : and to *know*  
 Rather consists in opening out a way  
 Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,  
 Than in effecting entry for a light  
 Supposed to be without.”

One night, while sitting in deep meditation under a fig tree (*ficus religiosa*), the consciousness of true insight possessed him. He saw the mistaken ways of the faiths that then obtained, he discerned the sources whence earthly suffering flowed, and the way that led to their annihilation. He saw that the cause of suffering lay in a selfish cleaving to life, and that the way of escape from suffering lay in the attainment of the ten perfections (*daśa pāramitās*). With the discernment of these grand truths and their realization in life the Bodhisattva became enlightened ; he thus attained *Sambodhi* and became a Buddha. Rightly has *Sambodhi* been called *Svabodhanam* to emphasise the fact that it can be accomplished only by self-help without the extraneous aid of a teacher or an *Īsvara*. As the poet says,

“ Save his own soul’s light overhead,  
 None leads man, none ever led.”

Now arrived the most critical moment in the life of the Blessed One. After many struggles he had found the most profound truths, truths teeming with meaning but comprehensible only by the wise, truths fraught with blessings but difficult to discern by ordinary minds (*prtagjana*). Mankind were worldly and hankering for pleasure. Though they possessed the capacity for knowledge and virtue and could perceive the true nature of things, they remained in ignorance, entangled by deceptive thoughts. Could they comprehend the law of Karma, the law of concatenation of cause and effect in the moral world ? Could they rid themselves of the animistic idea of a soul and grasp the true nature of man ? Could they overcome the propensity to seek salvation through a mediatorial caste of priests ? Could they understand the final state of peace, that quenching of all worldly cravings which leads

to the blissful haven of *Nirvāṇa*? Would it be advisable for him in these circumstances to preach to all mankind the truths he had discovered? Might not failure result in anguish and pain? Such were the doubts and questions which arose in his mind, but only to be smothered and quenched by thoughts of universal compassion. He who had abandoned all selfishness could not but live for others. What could be a better way of living for others than to show them the path of attaining perfect bliss? What could be greater service to mankind than to rescue the struggling creatures engulfed in the mournful sea of *samsāra*? Is not the gift of Dharma the greatest of all gifts? When the Perfect One considered how sorrow and suffering oppressed all beings, he became very compassionate, and made up his mind to preach to all mankind the eternal truths he had discovered.

“ Amongst the nations I shall go  
And ope the door that to the deathless leads.  
Let those that have ears to hear  
Master the noble path of salvation.”

With this firm resolve he started for Benares which has been famous for centuries as the centre of religious life and thought. On his way the Blessed One met one of his former acquaintances, Upaka, a naked Jain monk, who struck by his majestic and joyful appearance, asked: “Who is the teacher under whose guidance you have renounced the world?” The Enlightened One replied: “I have no master. To me there is no equal. I am the Perfect One, the Buddha. I have attained peace. I have obtained *Nirvāṇa*. To found the kingdom of righteousness I am going to Benares. There I shall light the lamp of life for the benefit of those who are enshrouded in the darkness of sin and death.” Upaka then asked: “Do you profess to be the Jina, the conqueror of the world?” The Buddha replied: “Jinas are those who have conquered self and the passions of self, those alone are victors who control their passions and abstain from sin. I have conquered self and overcome all sin. Therefore am I the Jina.”

“ He whose life is pure, whose thought is good,  
Whose subject senses own him sovereign lord,  
Whose heart and mind no attachment hampers,  
Whose head and heart love and gladness fill,  
Who remorseless ignorance has killed,  
Who pride of egoism has slain,  
Who, from all defilements purged and free,  
Combines truth and valour and resource  
With foresight, kindness and fixed resolve :

- He has all Fetters utterly destroyed  
And made the Conquest glorious and true."

At Benares he met Kaundinya and his four companions in the Deer Park, Isipatāṇa. When these five (the *pañchavaggiya*) saw the Tathāgata coming towards them, they agreed among themselves not to rise in salutation, nor greet him, nor offer him the customary refreshments, when he came, for he had broken his first vow by giving up ascetic practices. However, when the Tathāgata approached them, they involuntarily rose from their seats, and in spite of their resolution greeted him and offered to wash his feet and do all that he might require. But they addressed him as Gautama after his family. Then the Lord said to them: "Call me not after my private name, for it is a rude and careless way of addressing one who has become an *Arhat*. My mind is undisturbed, whether people treat me with respect or disrespect. But it is not courteous for others to call one who looks equally with a kind heart upon all living beings by his familiar name. Buddhas bring salvation to the world, and therefore they ought to be treated with respect as children treat their fathers." Then he preached to them his first great sermon, the *Dharmachakra-pravartana Sutra*, in which he explained the Four Great Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, and made converts of them. They received the ordination and formed the first nucleus of the holy brotherhood of disciples known as the *Saṅgha*. Soon after, one night the Blessed One met Yaças, the youthful son of a rich merchant (*Srēṣṭhi*) of Benares, who was wandering like a madman much distressed by the sorrows of this world. The Tathāgata consoled him by pointing out the way to the blessedness of Nirvāṇa, and made him his disciple. Seeing that Yaças had become a bhikṣhu, his former fifty-four jovial companions also joined the Saṅgha. The Blessed One sent out these sixty as missionaries in different directions to preach his universal religion. Shortly afterwards the Buddha had an accession of a thousand new disciples by the conversion of three leading fire-worshipping ascetics,\* Uruvilva Kāsyapa, Nadi Kāsyapa and Gayā Kāsyapa, all brothers, with all their followers. To these he preached on a hill near Gayā a sermon on the fire sacrifice. In this discourse he explained how ignorance produced the three fires of lust, hatred and delusion, which burnt all living beings, and how these three fires might be quenched by the giving up of *śin* and the pursuit of right conduct.

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\* Jatilas (ascetics wearing matted hair).



From Gayā followed by his numerous disciples the Blessed One proceeded to Rājagriha, the capital of Magadha. After his great renunciation Siddārtha passed through Rājagriha, and Bimbisāra, the king of Magadha, failing to dissuade him from his resolve to attain bodhi, requested the Bodhisattva to come back to Rājagriha after the accomplishment of his purpose and receive him as his disciple. In compliance with this request the Blessed One now visited Rājagriha. King Bimbisāra, hearing of the arrival of the World-Honoured, went with his counsellors, generals and myriads of Magadha Brahmans and Sreshtis to the place where the Blessed One was. When the king and his followers saw Uruvilva Kāsyapa with the Blessed One, they began to question if the latter had placed himself under the spiritual guidance of the former. But Kāsyapa removed their doubt by prostrating himself at the feet of the Blessed One, and explained how, after seeing the peace of Nirvāṇa, he could no longer find delight in sacrifices and offerings, which promised no better rewards than pleasures and women. The Blessed One, perceiving the state of mind of his audience, preached to them on the inconstancy of the self, the so-called lord of knowledge, which, originating from sensation and recollection, must necessarily be subject to the condition of cessation. On hearing this discourse the king and many of those that accompanied him took refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṅgha, and became lay followers. The king then invited the Blessed One to the royal palace, entertained him and his bhikshus and presented to the Saṅgha his pleasure garden, the bamboo grove *Vēṇuvana*, as a dwelling-place for the homeless disciples of the Great Teacher.

A much more important event connected with the Blessed One's stay at Rājagriha was the conversion of Sāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, both pupils of the wandering monk Saṅjaya. One day as Asvajit, one of the first five that were ordained by the Buddha, was going on his alms-seeking round, Sāriputra saw the noble and dignified mien of Asvajit, and asked him who his teacher was and what doctrine he professed. Asvajit replied that his teacher was the Blessed One and summed up the Tāthagata's teaching in the well-known lines :

“ Whatever things proceed from a cause,  
 Of them the Buddha has stated the cause  
 And what their dissolution is.  
 ● This is what the Great Sramana teaches.”

On hearing this Śāriputra went to Maudgalyāyana and told him what he had heard. Then both of them went with all their followers to the Tathāgata and took their refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṅgha. The Buddha held both of them in high estimation for their intelligence and learning. Some of the books of the Abhidharma, the philosophical part of the Tripitaka, are ascribed to these two learned bhikshus. Another worthy acquisition to the faith during the Master's stay in the Bamboo Grove was the Brahman sage, Mahā Kāśyapa, who had renounced his handsome virtuous wife, his immense wealth and all his possessions to find out the way of salvation. It was he, who, after the *parinirvāṇa* of the Lord, held a council at Rājagriha under the patronage of King Ajātasatru, and collected the Tripitaka, the Buddhist canon, with the help of a large number of bhikshus. He was in fact the first patriarch of the Buddhist Church.

During his active life as a teacher, the Blessed One made many converts. High and low, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, Brahmins and Chandālas, Jains and Ājīvakas, house-holders and ascetics, robbers and cannibals, nobles and peasants, men and women—all classes and conditions of men furnished him with many disciples, both ordained and lay. Among his converts were King Prasenajit of Kosala, Panchasikha the follower of Kapila, Mahā-Kātyāyana of Benares, King Udayana of Kausāmbi, Kuṭadanta, the head of the Brahman community of the village of Danamati, Krishi Bhāradvāja of the Brahman village of Ekanāla, Aṅgulimāla the bandit and assassin who was the terror of the kingdom of Kosala, Ālavaka the cannibal of Āṭavi, Ugrasena the acrobat, Upāli the barber who had the honour of reciting the *Vinaya* collection of the Tripitaka in Kāśyapa's Council, and Sunita the scavenger who was despised of men. Some of the members of the Sākya clan who were the close kith and kin of Siddārtha also became the followers of Sākyamuni. Suddhodana, the father of Siddārtha, became a lay disciple, and Rāhula, his son, joined the Saṅgha. Yasodhara, the wife of Siddārtha, and Prajāpati Gautāmi, his aunt, both joined the order of bhikshunis, which was established with some reluctance by the Master owing to the importunities of Prajāpati Gautāmi and the intercession of Ānanda. Ānanda, who was the Buddha's constant companion and personal attendant, was one of his cousins.

Another of his cousins was Devadatta who became notorious in later days by attempting to found a new sect of his own with

severer and stricter rules than those prescribed by the Buddha. When he did not succeed in getting many followers, even though he had a special Vihāra built for him by King Ajātasatru, the son of King Bimbisāra, he plotted many schemes to take the life of Sākyamuni. Murderers were set up to kill the Lord, but they were converted as soon as they saw him and listened to his preaching. The rock hurled down from the Gridhrakuta hill to hit the Master split in twain, and haply both pieces passed by without doing him much harm. The drunken elephant that was let loose on the royal highway just at the time when the Blessed One was coming along that path became docile in his presence. After these failures Ajātasatru, suffering greatly from the pangs of conscience, sought peace in his distress by going to the Blessed One and learning the way of salvation.

Twelve of Buddha's disciples became famous as preachers. These were Ajnāta Kaundinya, Asvajit, Sāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, Mahā Kāśyapa, Mahā Katyāyana, Anuruddha, Upāli, Pindola Bharadvāja, Kausthila, Rāhula, and Purṇa Maitrāyaniputra. In the conversation with Subhadra just before his death, the Blessed One said : " Save in my religion the twelve great disciples, who, being good themselves, rouse up the world and deliver it from indifference, are not to be found."

Among the many patrons and benefactors of the Buddha no names are more famous than those of Anāthapindika, the supporter of the orphans ; Jīvaka, the physician ; Visākha, the "mother" of Migāra ; and Ambapālī, the courtesan of Vāisālī. Sudatta, called Anāthapindika on account of his charities to the orphans and the poor, was a merchant of Srāvashti of immense wealth. He bought at an enormous price a magnificent park at Srāvashti from Prince Jeta, and built the splendid Jetavana Vihāra for the Buddha and his ordained disciples. Jīvaka was the renowned physician-in-ordinary to Bimbisāra, and was appointed by the king to undertake medical attendance on Buddha and his followers. It was at his instance that the bhikshus, who were previously wearing only cast-off rags, were permitted to accept robes from the laity. Visākha was the daughter-in-law of Migāra, a rich Jain merchant of Srāvashti, but she was generally known as the "mother" of Migāra, as she was the cause of Migāra's conversion to the Buddhist faith. She was the first to become a matron of the lay sisters, and obtained permission from the Lord to provide the chief necessities of life on a large scale to the bhikshus and bhikshunis. Another service of hers

was the erection of the Vihāra of Pūrvārāma near Srāvashti, which in splendour was inferior only to the Vihāra built by Anāthapindika. Ambapālī, “who was beautiful, graceful, pleasant, gifted with the highest beauty of complexion, well-versed in dancing, singing and lute playing, and through whom Vaisālī became more and more flourishing,” presented to the Master her stately mansion and mango grove and became a bhikshuni.

In the time of Sākyamuni India was in a state of great intellectual ferment. There were many other religious teachers less known to fame than Gautama Buddha. The Buddhist books make special mention of at least six heretical teachers. One of them, Sanjaya Vairatṭhiputra, repudiated all knowledge of the self, and propounded a kind of pyrrhonism. Ajita Kesakambalī rejected all claims to knowledge by higher insight, and admitting no other life, resolved man into the four elements—earth, water, air, fire—which dispersed at death. Pūraṇa Kāśyapa was an indifferentist, who acknowledged no moral distinctions, and consequently no merit or demerit. Maskarin Gosāla, probably the founder of the sect of Ājīvakas, was a fatalist who admitted no voluntary action and karma. According to him everything was impelled by *niyati* or fate to work out the law of its nature. Man had no power to shape his own life. Everything went through a fixed series of rebirths, and at the end of these the fool as well as the wise put a stop to pain. The Blessed One condemned Gosāla’s teaching as the worst of all errors. Nirgrantha Jñātīputra, better known as Mahāvīra among the Jains, was one of the renovators of the Jain faith. He taught the reality of individual souls and the continuance of personal identity after death. He not only believed in transmigration, but also carried down the course of metempsychosis below the level of animal existence to plants and inanimate things. His way of salvation was based on asceticism and inaction. He commended suicide as “good, wholesome, proper, beatifying, meritorious.” The Jains claim that Mahāvīra had in his days nearly two hundred thousand followers, including monks, nuns, and laymen.

The great popularity of the Master and the gifts which the pious laics bestowed on his followers created a jealousy in the hearts of the leaders of heretical sects. These conspired to sully the reputation of Sākyamuni and ruin him in the eyes of the people. They induced a heretical nun, Chiñchā, to accuse the Master of adultery before the assemblage. Her calumny was exposed and

she was made to suffer terribly for her misdeed. Not baffled by this failure the heresiarchs made a second attempt to slander the Master. This time they induced one Sundarī, a member of one of the heretical sects, to spread a rumour that she passed one night in the bed-chamber of the Teacher. After this slander had been made sufficiently public, the heretics bribed a gang of drunkards to assassinate Sundarī. These scoundrels killed her, and threw her corpse in the bushes close to the Jetavana Vihāra. The heresiarchs then loudly clamoured for the institution of legal proceedings against the Lord. Luckily their plan failed owing to the imprudence of the assassins, who, reuniting after the murder in a tavern and excited by strong drink, quarrelled among themselves and reproached one another of having committed the crime. They were immediately arrested by the police and brought before the royal tribunal. When they were questioned as to the murder of Sundarī, the scoundrels openly confessed their guilt, and declared also the names of those who had employed them to commit the crime. The king ordered the assassins as well as the instigators of the crime to be put to death. On another occasion the heretics instigated Śrīgupta to take the life of the Master by poisoning his food and misleading him into a pit of fire, but by pity and calm forgiveness the Holy One

“ Saved Śrīgupta from spite and crime  
And showed how mercy conquers e’en a foe,  
And thus he taught forgiveness’ rule sublime,  
To free his followers from the world and woe.”

The manner in which the Enlightened One ordinarily spent each day was very simple. He used to rise up early, wash and dress himself without assistance. He would then meditate in solitude till it was time to go on his round for a meal. When the time arrived, he would, dressing himself suitably, with his bowl in hand, alone or attended by some disciples, visit the neighbouring town or village. After finishing his meal in some house, he would discourse on the Dharma to the host and his family with due regard to their capacity for spiritual enlightenment, return to his lodgings and wait in the open verandah till all his followers had finished their meal. He would then retire to his private apartment and, after suggesting subjects for thought to some of his disciples, take a short rest during the heat of the day. In the afternoon he would meet the folk from the neighbouring villages or town assembled in the lecture-hall, and discourse to them on the Dharma in a manner appropriate to the occasion and

suiting to their capacities. Then, at the close of the day, after refreshing himself with a bath when necessary, he would explain difficulties or expound the doctrine to some of his disciples thus spending the first watch of the night. Part of the remainder he spent in meditation walking up and down outside his chamber, and the other part sleeping in his bed-chamber. During the nine months of fair weather, the Lord was wont to go from place to place walking from fifteen to twenty miles a day. During the rainy season he generally stayed in the Jetavana Vihāra or in the Purvārāma.

The Blessed One's method of exposition differed entirely from those of the Brahmans. Far from presenting his thoughts under the concise form so characteristic of the Brahmans, he imparted his teaching in the form of sermons. Instead of mysterious teachings confided almost in secret to a small number, he spoke to large audiences composed of all those who desired to hear him. He spoke in a manner intelligible to all, and tried by frequent repetitions to impress his meaning on the least attentive minds and the most rebellious memories. He adapted himself to the capacities of his hearers. He first talked about the merits obtained in alms-giving, about the duties of morality, about future happiness, about the danger, the vanity and the defilement of lusts, and about the blessings of the abandonment of lusts. When he saw that the mind of his hearer was prepared, unprejudiced, impressionable, free from hindrances to the comprehension of the Truth, elated and believing, then he preached the special doctrine of the Buddha, namely, suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the Path. This profound difference between the Buddha's method and that of the Brahmans penetrates to the very essence of Buddhism, whose most marked trait is proselytism.

While his discussions with the learned were more or less formal and often coldly logical, in his conversation with ordinary men the Master generally resorted to similes and parables, fables and folklore, historical anecdotes and episodes, proverbs and popular sayings. The parable of the mustard-seed, described in the next chapter, illustrates how the Holy One brought home plain truths to the minds of simple folk. In the conversion of the wealthy Brahman, Krishi Bhāradvāja, the Buddha worked out the process of agriculture into an elaborate allegory. One day while staying in the southern district of Magadha (*Dakshinagiri*) the Buddha visited the Brahman village of Ekanāla. Bhāradvāja was then

superintending the labourers in his field. With alms-bowl in hand the Blessed One approached the Brahman. Some went up and paid reverence to the Lord, but the Brahman reproached the Master saying: "O Sramaṇa, I plough and sow, and having ploughed and sown, I eat; it would be better if you were in like manner to plough and sow, and then you would also have food to eat." "O Brahman," replied the Buddha, "I too plough and sow, and having ploughed and sown, I eat." "But," said the Brahman, "if you are a husbandman, where are the signs of it? Where are your bullocks, the seed, and the plough?" Then the Teacher answered: "Faith is the seed I sow; devotion is the rain that fertilizes it; modesty is the plough-shaft; the mind is the tie of the yoke; mindfulness is my ploughshare and goad. Truthfulness is the means to bind; tenderness, to untie. Energy is my team and bullock. Thus this ploughing is effected, destroying the weeds of delusion. The harvest that it yields is the ambrosia fruit of Nirvāṇa, and by this ploughing all sorrow is brought to an end." Then the Brahman poured milk-rice into a golden bowl and handed it to the Lord saying: "Eat, O Gautama, the milk-rice. Indeed, thou art a husbandman; for thou, Gautama, accomplishest a ploughing, which yields the fruit of immortality." When the Holy One desired to point a moral or convey a reproof, he related an anecdote or a fable treating its characters as representing the previous existences of himself and the other persons concerned. Such anecdotes are known as *Jātakas* or birth-stories.

More potent than his method and his word was the Blessed One's wonderful personality. When he talked with men, his serene look inspired them with awe and reverence, and his lovely voice struck them with rapture and amazement. Could mere words have converted the robber Aṅgulimala or the cannibal of Āṭavi? To have come under his spell is to be his for ever. He was a winner of hearts. It is not so much because he preached the truth that his hearers believed; it is because he had won their hearts that his words appeared to them true and salutary. A single word from him was enough to reconcile King Prasenajit to his Queen Mallika. His heart always overflowed with kindness. Was it not the effluence of the Master's love that made Roja the Mallian follow him as a calf does the cow? To meet him is to be penetrated by his love (*maitri*) and to know him is to love him for ever.

In his last preaching tour the Master came to the town of Pāvā, and there in the house of Chunda, a worker in metals, he had his last repast. After this he became ill and moved to Kusinagara in the eastern part of the Nepalese Terai, where he died at the ripe age of eighty about 483 B.C.\* Even in his last moments he received a monk Subhadra, explained to him the Noble Eightfold Path, and converted him to the true faith. His last words to his disciples were : "Decay is inherent in all compound things. Seek wisdom and work out your salvation with diligence."

The remains of the Blessed One were burnt by the Mallas of Kusinagara with all the honours and pomp worthy of a king of kings. After cremation the relics were carried to the town-hall, and guarded there for a week covered by a cupola of lances in an enclosure of bows and honoured with garlands, perfumes, music and dances. When Ajātasatru, the king of Magada, heard of the death of the Lord at Kusinagara, he sent an ambassador to the Mallas of that place to demand of them a portion of the relics, as he desired to erect a tumulus (stupa) in honour of these relics. The same demand was also made by the Licchavis of Vaisāli, the Sākyas of Kapilavastu, the Bulis of Alahappa, the Koliyas of Rāmagrāma and the Mallas of Pāvā. A Brahman of Vethadvipa also demanded a share on the plea of his being a Brahman. At first the Mallas of Kusinagara were not willing to satisfy these demands, as the Lord attained *parinirvāṇa* in their territory. But on the advice of the Brahman Drona, who pointed out to the Mallas the indecency of quarrelling over the relics of one who had preached universal brotherhood, the Mallas of Kusinagara changed their mind. Drona was then entrusted with the distribution, and he took for himself the urn, over which he desired to erect a stupa. After the division the Mauryas of Pippalavana sent an envoy for demanding some relics, but they had to content themselves with the charcoal from the funeral pyre. Those that received a share of the relics (*dhātu*) preserved them in dāgobas (*dhāthugarbhas*) erected in their respective countries.

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\* The actual cause of the death of the Buddha was, coupled with extreme old age, an attack of dysentery following a meal of *sukara-maddava*. Some think that the dish consisted of the succulent parts of a young wild boar, specially prepared by the beloved disciple, Chunda, as a medicine (*vasāyana*) for incipient dysentery. While others suggest that *sukara-maddava* was an edible fungus or mushroom. One suggestion is that the dish consisted not of boar's flesh, but of *sukara kanda*, the root of a bulbous plant which is an article of vegetarian diet. According to Fleet he died on the 13th day of October 483 B.C.



It is said that Emperor Asoka opened these ancient dāgobas and distributed the relics contained in them all over his wide empire, and built more than eighty thousand stupas and dāgobas for their preservation.

Such is, freed from the fanciful additions of a pious posterity, the life of the historic Buddha. How much of it is real history, is rather difficult to say. But as to the historicity of Gautama Sākyamuni himself there can be no doubt. As Minayeff remarks in his *Recherches sur le Bouddhisme*, it is beyond doubt that grand historical personalities always appear specially at the commencement of great historic movements, and certainly it has been the case in the history of Buddhism, and we cannot doubt that its development also began with the work of a historical personality. There are, however, some orientalist like M. Emil Senart, who, while not altogether denying the existence of the historic Buddha,\* try to make out that the few historic elements are so much encrusted with mythical outgrowths that it is almost impossible to determine the former with certainty. "It is necessary," says M. E. Senart in his *Essai sur la Légende du Buddha*, "to recognise that, on the whole, excepting a few authentic souvenirs which easily slip through our fingers, the legend of Buddha represents not a real life, nor even a life coloured with fanciful inventions, but it is essentially the poetical glorification of a mythological and divine type that popular veneration has fixed as an aureole on the head of a perfectly human real founder of a sect."

Examining this view of M. Senart in his monograph on *Māra und Buddha*, Dr. Ernst Windisch writes: "When we consider how long he (Gautama Sākyamuni) lived, how far he travelled, how well-known he must have been to his contemporaries; when we further consider how old certain texts, at least parts of the *Vinayapitaka*, are, it is certainly not uncritical to regard as historical what seems to be a historical reality. This is more in accordance with the historic method than to regard the simple narrative of the life and events of the time as the transfiguration of a myth into ordinary life. Besides, this process must have been effected in a tolerably short time. For, against M. Senart's assertion that the mythical tendency can be traced back to the earliest days of Buddhism, I venture to point out that in the

\* Le Bouddha, Gautama ou Sākyamuni, est certainement un personnage historique et réel; il est cependant dans la tradition le héros de récits mythiques d'origine et de caractère.—Origines bouddhiques, pp. 6-7.

oldest Buddhist literature we meet with only such tendencies as are generally characteristic of ordinary life, persons and events in which no impartial observer can find any trace of a myth. To the historical events which, according to M. Senart, can have only a mythical meaning, belongs above all the tradition that the Buddha attained the highest wisdom under a *nyāgrodha* tree." The same scholar notices in passing the view put forward by Dr. H. Kern that the legend may be taken as perfectly true if we regard it as a mythical transformation of astronomical phenomena, and disposes of it with the remark that Dr. Kern's remarkable knowledge of astronomy enables him to see stars twinkling in regions where there is not the smallest ground for any such assumption.

Whatever may be the verdict of historic criticism on the details of the life of Gautama Sākyamuni, there can be no doubt that among the founders of religions he occupies a marked place. His dignified bearing, his high intellectual endowments, his penetrating glance, his oratorical power, the firmness of his convictions, his gentleness, kindness, and liberality, and the attractiveness of his character—all testify to his greatness. "Among heathen precursors of the truth," writes Bishop Milman: "I feel more and more that Sākyamuni is the nearest in character and effect to Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Similarly, says even Barthelémy Saint-Hilaire, who has no end of charges against Buddhism: "Than Buddha there is with the sole exception of the Christ no purer, no more touching figure among the founders of religions. His life is without blemish; he is the finished model of heroism, the self-renunciation, the love, the sweetness he commands." But the impartial philosophic critic finds that Gautama Sākyamuni towers above the founders of all other religions by his life, by his personal character, by the methods of propagandism he employed, and by his final success. In him were united the truest princely qualities with the intelligence of a sage and the passionate devotion of a martyr. Though born of an aristocratic and ruling class, Gautama Buddha lived the life of an ordinary man, discarding the narrow distinctions of caste, rank and wealth. He knew the world. He was son, husband, father, and devoted friend. He was not only a man, but never professed to be anything more than a man. He gave a trial to the creeds of his ancestors, but ultimately made for himself a nobler faith. His teaching was perfect, but never pretended to be a supernatural revelation. He did not doubt the capacity of man to understand

the truth, and never had recourse to the arts of exorcism. He based all his reasoning on the fact of man's existence, and developed his practical philosophy by the observation and minute study of human nature. In an age innocent of science he found for the problems of the Whence, the Whither and the Why solutions worthy of a scientific age. His aim was to rescue mankind from the fetters of passion and avarice and to convince them of an ideal higher than mere worldly good. He preached the gospel of renunciation attainable by meditation, a renunciation which did not lead one to the dreamy quietism of pantheistic or nihilistic philosophy but to the purification of one's activity by intellectual and ethical enlightenment so as to bring one to the love of all beings by faith in an eternal Dharmakāya.

Among the world's religious teachers Gautama Sākyamuni alone has the glory of having rightly judged the intrinsic greatness of man's capacity to work out his salvation without extraneous aid. If "the worth of a truly great man consists in his raising the worth of all mankind," who is better entitled to be called truly great than the Blessed One, who, instead of degrading man by placing another being over him, has exalted him to the highest pinnacle of wisdom and love? His figure is the noblest, the most perfect that man can ever attain. "It was genius unequalled among the sons of men that inspired the Buddha's teaching. It was genius commanding in its dictatorial strength that held together his order. It was genius, the first and last that India saw, that in its lofty aims and universality, foreshadowed the possibility of uniting the people into one great nationality, if such had ever been possible." Indeed the Tathāgata is the Light of the World. No wonder that even those who first rejected his teaching had at last to include him in their pantheon by making him an avatār\* of one of the very gods whom he had himself discarded !

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\* There can be no doubt that the 9th incarnation of Vishnu, which goes by the name of Buddhāvatar, is no other than the Lord Buddha. The only book wholly devoted to the avatars of Vishnu is the *Dasāvatāracharitra* of Kshemendra, who lived in the 11th century. In this book the Buddha, who is the ninth incarnation of Vishnu, is described as the son of Suddhodana and Māyadevi. Again in the *Nilamata-purāṇa*, which is the canonical authority of the Brahminical cult in Kashmir, the birthday of the Buddha, as an incarnation of Vishnu, is celebrated on the full moon of the month of *Vaisakha*, which is the anniversary of the *Nirvāṇa*, in all Buddhist countries. On that day, we are told in the *Purāṇa* the image of the Buddha is to be set up and worshipped with the recitation of sentences employed by the Sākyas. The Sākyas (*i.e.*, the Buddha bhikshus) too are to be worshipped

“Those only are godlike who shrink from sin  
The white-souled tranquil votaries of good.”

and to be presented with garments, food and books. In the calendars of modern Kashmir the Buddha's birth still retains a place. The *Nepāla-Mahātmya*, the guide of the Brahmin pilgrim in Nepal, teaches by the mouth of Pārvati, the wife of Siva that “in this incomparable country to adore Buddha is to adore Siva,” and it expressly prescribes rites in honour of Buddha “who is a form of Vishnu.” The Buddha image in the Mahabodhi temple at Buddha Gaya, which is now in the possession of a Hindu ascetic, is worshipped by the Hindus as the Buddhāvatār o Vishnu. The promotion of the Buddha to the rank of a god as an incarnation o Vishnu, who came upon earth to delude the enemies of the Brahmins was a clever device adopted by the Brahmins to maintain their position of superiority in the estimation of other Hindus. The bulk of the people had certain beliefs, practices and prejudices, to which they were ardently attached; the Hindu revivalists were few in number and could not undo them by force, and they had, therefore, to resort to fraud. They tried to convince the people that there was no real difference between them, and that he whom they called Buddha was no other than Vishnu. The other avatāras of Vishnu were invented to give the avatāra idea a semblance o antiquity and to include in the list some other great Kshatriya heroes. These Kshatriya heroes, Rama and Krishna, are depicted as teaching the Hindus not to violate the rules of caste, which virtually amounts to asking them not to follow the teachings of the Buddha. The canonical number of avatāras is ten and this number reminds one of the ten *mahājātakas*.

The Buddha has two distinct characters. In his first and earliest character he is the typical *yogi*, the great teacher of the power to be gained by self-suppression and by conquest of the passions. In his second he is the great friend of the common people, advocating universal brotherhood, universal equality, and universal compassion for all forms of animal life. In both these forms the personal god Siva and the incarnated Vishnu are his counterparts, and have ultimately superseded him. Siva is the Buddha in his character of a *yogi*. Vishnu is the Buddha in his character of a beneficent and unselfish friend of the human race. Siva and Vishnu slowly replaced Agni and Indra, the favourite deities of the Vedic pantheon.

The Buddha has been canonised by the Christian Church. Both in the Roman and the Greek Churches a day is set apart for St. Josaphat, which name has been shown to be a corruption of *bodhisattva*. There is also reason to suppose that the story of the life of St. Eustathius Placidus is a version of *Nigrodhamriga Jataka*. The influence of Buddhism on Christianity is still deeper. “The more one reads the Pali scriptures, the more one is convinced that the life and teachings of the Buddha have been duplicated in the Gospels of the Apostles. The marvels and wonders which happened at the time of the Buddha's conception, birth, renunciation, temptation and enlightenment are to be found in the *Acchariya Abbhuta Sutta*, *Majjhima Nikāya*.” It seems evident that Buddhism by means of its convents for monks and nuns, its legends of saints, its worship of relics, its towers, its bells, and above all, through its rich ritual and hierarchical pomp, did exercise influence on the development of Christian worship and ritual. The influence of Indian Buddhism on the development of Gnosticism and Manicheism is also established.

Speaking of the connection between Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism from early days, Mr. H. J. Allen (Transactions of the 3rd International Congress of Religions, Vol. I) says: “In conclusion it seems that the Chinese like other nations

No teacher was so godless as Lord Buddha yet none so godlike. Though the master of all, he was the universal brother of each. While despising the follies of the world, he lived and moved among men serenely and lovingly. When surrounded by all his retinue of followers, and glorified by the whole world, he never once thought that these privileges were his ; but went on doing good, just as the shower brings gladness yet reflects not on its work. Though exalted and adored, he never arrogated to himself divinity. The Burmese relate that, hearing all people singing his praises, the Blessed One called Ānanda and said : " All this is unworthy of me. No such vain homage can accomplish the words of the Dharma. They who do righteously pay me most honour, and please me most." To the unbiassed thinker even the legends which enshroud the life of Sākyasimha are not without significance. They set before him a truly admirable figure : a man of quiet majesty, of wisdom and pleasant humour, consistent in thought, word and deed, of perfect equanimity and moral fervour, exempt from every prejudice, overcoming evil with good, and full of tenderness for all beings. In some of the legends, the

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forged their old records. The *Tao-te-ching* has already been declared to be an impudent forgery compiled during the Han dynasty, and the religion known as Taoism, appears from the evidence given to have been originally identical with Buddhism. The word Tao was used by the Buddhists to designate the Eight-fold Path or moral law, and it is by this latter term that Mr. Ku-hung-ming translates Tao in his admirable rendering of the Confucian Chung-Yung treatise. Confucian doctrines were partly based on the teachings of Buddhist monks who permeated China before 150 B.C. and there seems to be some ground for the Chinese assertion that the three religions (Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism) are one."

Abu-l-Atahiya, a contemporary of Harun al Rashid says : " If you desire to see the most noble of mankind, look at the king in beggar's clothing ; it is he whose sanctity is great among men." Professor Goldziher of Buda-Pest regards this king as no other than the Buddha. Some also perceive the influence of Buddhist *triratna* (the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha) in the Islamic ideas of *gamaa*, *igma* and *sunna*. Sufism seems to be nothing more than Buddhism modified by Islam, as in Sufism also the final aim is *fana*, annihilation, *maḥv*, the extinction of individual life. The worship of saints in Islam is also due to Buddhist influence.

Dazai, a Japanese philosopher, says : " Altogether the Shintoists of to-day, whether they be of the Yu-ichi or the Songen schools, are based on Buddhism, from which they have selected what suited them, and though outwardly they are opposed to Buddhism, in reality they are both of the same kidney." This is in substantial agreement with the conclusions of European savants.

We may therefore say with Prof. Sylvain Levi that " it looks as if the whole universe moved under a common impulse to a work of salvation under the auspices of Buddhism." (*Conférences au Musée Guimet* : Tome 25. p. 215.)

so-called birth-stories, the Buddha is represented as having voluntarily endured infinite trials through numberless ages and births, that he might deliver mankind, foregoing the right to enter Nirvāṇa and casting himself again and again into the stream of human life and destiny for the sole purpose of teaching the way of liberation from sorrow and suffering. The ideal of persistent energy thus held up before the disciple is intensely human. And even if the virtues of the Tathāgata are infinitely superior to those of ordinary men, still the ideal can serve as a pattern and guide. The disciple can always take the Buddha as his model so that the recollection of his heroic and saintly life may assist him to be a hero and a saint as well. In his unbounded love for all being Sākyamuni stands unparalleled. And it is not a poetic fancy, but a profound philosophic truth that makes him the best

“Who loveth best  
All things both great and small.”

## CHAPTER II

### THE RATIONALITY OF BUDDHISM

IS Buddhism a system of philosophy and practical ethics, or a religion? The answer to this question will depend upon the definition of the term religion. If by religion is meant something which inspires man with enthusiasm and fervour; which impels him to seek that which is regarded as the best; which places before him the highest idea of perfection and lifts him above the level of ordinary goodness and produces a yearning after a higher and better life; which, springing up as an aspiration in the human mind, blossoms into forgetfulness of self and service of fellow-beings, then Buddhism is certainly a religion, as it has given enthusiasm for virtue and spiritual joy to nearly five hundred millions of the world's population and has served to carry men through material pains and evils and make them good, kind, generous, pure and loving. But if we take as the beginning of religion the hankering for the unseen and the unintelligible, or the feeling for the infinite, or the fear of some supernatural being who is supposed to be the cause and controller of all things, and on whom man feels himself dependent, and to whose will he makes an appeal in his worship, then Buddhism is not entitled to the name of religion, as it rejects all dependence on the supernatural and requires man to depend upon himself for salvation from the miseries of life. The most striking feature of Buddhism is that it eschews all hypothesis regarding the unknown, and concerns itself wholly with the facts of life in the present work-a-day world. The Blessed One once told a Brāhman: "There are, O Brāhman, many Sramaṇas and Brāhmaṇas that maintain that night is day, and day is night. But I, Brāhman, maintain that night is night and day is day." To another Brāhman he flatly said: "The Tathāgata is free from all theories." The starting point for Buddhism is not dogma or belief in the supernatural, but the fact of the existence of sorrow and suffering, not merely the sorrow and suffering of the poor and the wretched, but also of those that live in the lap of luxury. Its goal is not heaven or a union with God or Brahman, but to find a refuge for man from the miseries of the world in the safe haven of an

intellectual and ethical life through self-conquest and self-culture. The Buddhist is not concerned so much with the nature of the world as with its practical interpretation. In so far as he believes that a certain correlation of moral forces determines the propriety and effectiveness of a certain type of living, he is indeed religious. If he does not believe in an independent, objectively existent supernatural personality, he believes in *Dharmakāya*, a reality practically recognised in respect to its ultimate attitude to his ideals, and this belief serves as much to conserve value as the belief in an actual personal God.

Standing on the firm rock of facts, Buddhism, unlike the so-called revealed religions, has never contested the prerogative of reason to be the ultimate criterion of truth. When the Blessed One visited the territory of the Kālāma princes, they said to him: "Lord, Brahmanas and sectarian teachers visit us and preach their respective doctrines, each one solemnly asserting that what he teaches is the only truth and all the rest are false; and, on this account, Lord, doubt has overtaken us and we do not know which teaching to accept." The Buddha replied: "It is in the nature of things that doubt should arise. Do not believe in traditions merely because they have been handed down for many generations and in many places; do not believe in anything because it is rumoured and spoken of by many; do not believe because the written statement of some old sage is produced; do not believe in what you have fancied, thinking that because it is extraordinary, it must have been implanted by a deva or a wonderful being. After observation and analysis, when it agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it."\* Accordingly, Buddhism requires nothing to be accepted on trust without inquiry. It does not want one to believe in order to understand. To no question does it answer: "It is believable, because it is so absurd; it is true, because it is so impossible." It has been sometimes said that the "will to believe" plays a more important part in life than reason. If we once grant the will to believe, we must equally grant the will to disbelieve. Further, what is the will to believe but the will to hold something certain which one feels to be uncertain, the determination to beguile and hypnotise oneself in such a way as to accept as true what is clearly perceived to be error? The will to believe is nothing else than the will to

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\* Kālāma Sutta, Anguttara Nikāya.



deceive, first oneself and then, naturally, others. It is only a euphonious name for hypocrisy, which may be good for a church or a Jesuit, but not for religion or the seeker after truth. It may afford delight to the imagination, but it cannot secure permanent happiness nor enable man to fight against the forces of darkness. If religion is to be a knowledge and not a creed, a certainty and not a doubt, a real hope in death and not a wail of hysteria, a law of life and not a vague ecstasy, a solidly founded, convincing, coherent, definite logical system and not an irresponsible riot of emotion, then reason, not superstition, nor mere tradition, nor the will to believe, nor pragmatic utility, must be its foundation. As the *Jātakamāla*\* says, he who questions the validity of reason by means of reasoning with arguments, deserts his own position.

Of all religions Buddhism makes most demands on mental activity. The Buddha wants every man to doubt, inquire and be honestly convinced before following the way. "One must not accept my Dharma," says the Master, "from reverence, but first try it as gold is tried by fire." The Blessed One, therefore, rejects as worthless all recourse to authority and revelation for deciding between truth and error. The Buddha regards the frequent citation of the "holy" words of the Vedas by the Brahmans as the vain repetition of the words of others and not as indicative of faith. "It is as if a number of blind men were leading one another; the first one does not see; neither does the middle one see; nor does the last see." The Enlightened One draws a clear distinction between "the mere reception of the truth" and "the knowledge of the truth." Just as a spoon holding honey knows not the flavour of what it holds, so does a man who has simply received the truth with a believing heart. Just as a slave mounting up to the place from which a king has addressed his retinue and repeating the same words cannot become a king, just as the mere writing on the sand of the words "come hither" cannot make the bank of a river move from one side to the other, similarly the mere acceptance of doctrine or dogma on the authority of others can never lead to enlightenment, to that spiritual comprehension which alone can bring about freedom from sorrow. As the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* says: "One must not rely upon any one's opinion; nor say, such is the opinion of a *sthavira* (an elder), or of the Buddha, or of the Sangha; one must not

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\* The story of Mahābodhi.

abandon truth in itself ; one must be autonomous. Obedience to a tradition, to an authority can have no value by itself. To attain knowledge, instruction is necessary, but this instruction should be corroborated and assimilated by personal experience." The knowledge of the truth involves both a subjective and an objective element, and therefore possesses two criteria. Firstly, the perception of truth is possible only for a mind free from prejudice and passion. Secondly, as truth never lies on the surface, it needs pains to dive deep and grasp it. Higher than the knowledge of the truth is its internal appropriation, the practical realization of the truth through suitable training and development of one's intellectual and moral powers, the acquisition of enlightenment by investigation and contemplation coupled simultaneously with moral rectitude and love for all beings.

In Buddhism there are no beliefs which are not the outcome of knowledge. It does not constrain the rational human mind to dwell upon insoluble problems. Is the world eternal, or is it not eternal ? Is the world finite, or is it not finite ? Such questions have no value for Buddhism. "These inquiries," says the Blessed One in *Poṭṭhapāda Sutta*, "have nothing to do with things as they are, with the realities we know ; they are not concerned with the law of life ; they do not make for right conduct ; they do not conduce to the absence of lust, to freedom from passion, to right effort, to higher insight, to inward peace." Nor does Buddhism contain anything esoteric or mystic. In his last moments the Lord said to Ānanda : "I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine ; for in respect of the Dharma, Ānanda, the Tathāgata has no such thing as the closed fist of a Teacher who holds something back." On another occasion the Buddha said : "Secrecy is characteristic of three things : women who are in love seek secrecy and shun publicity ; so also do priests who claim to be in possession of special revelations, and all those who stray from the path of truth. Three things shine before the world and cannot be hidden. They are the moon, the sun, and the truth proclaimed by the Tathāgata. There is no secrecy about them." Such dicta flatly contradict the oft-repeated assertion that the Buddha taught during his lifetime secrets to his favourite disciples, or left a so-called "esoteric doctrine" to be treasured and handed down among a select few, but held back from the common herd. Nor is there the smallest justification for classing Buddhism with the various oriental

mystifications. On the other hand, it is found to be the very negation of all mysticism in both religion and philosophy. It is the only religion which does not lean for its support on the glamour of the unintelligible. It is the only religion which does not resort to the theologian's art of transforming the manifestly irrational into the seemingly rational. It does not ask you to believe three to be one and one to be three ; a father not to be older than his son and the son to be equal with the father ; and one proceeding from both to be fully equal to both. It lays no stress on virgin birth, or bodily resurrection, or vicarious suffering, or appeasing an angry god. Nor is it bound down by social and ecclesiastical prejudices which prevents its followers from openly expressing their convictions. It is the only religion which is *a priori* not in contradiction with the discoveries of science or with the spirit of the scientific method. No divorce between science and religion will ever be possible in Buddhism as in other religions. Though the Buddha had not the same detail of scientific information at his disposal as we possess to-day, he was still familiar with the essential problems of psychology, philosophy and religion. He saw in broad outline the correct solution of the problem of religion. He taught a religion based upon facts to replace a religion based upon the assumptions of dogmatic belief.

Though the Dharma does not ask you to believe blindly, still it lays great stress upon the cultivation of faith (*sraddha*). By faith of course is not meant the belief in something which is irrational and absurd, or the belief in creeds or dogmas, or the determination to be satisfied with unproved and unwarranted statements, but the conviction that truth can be found. While reason enables man to arrange and systematise knowledge so as to construct truth, faith gives him determination to be true to his convictions and ideals. Faith becomes superstition when it parts company with reason, and worse still when it fronts it in flat contradiction, but reason without faith would turn a man into a machine without enthusiasm for his ideals. Reason seeks disinterestedly to realise right order where it is not, but faith gives character and strength of will to break through the hindrances of mental sloth, lust, malice, spiritual pride and pyrrhonism. While reason rejoices in the truths it has already found, faith gives confidence and helps it onward to further conquests, to aspire after the attainment of what has not yet been attained, to work strenuously for the realisation of what has not yet been realised. It is faith alone that can transform

cold abstract rationalism into a religion of fervent hope and love. The Blessed One said :

“ By faith one crosses over the stream,  
By strenuousness the sea of life ;  
By steadfastness all grief he stills,  
By wisdom is he purified.”

Not only is there nothing in Buddhism which is opposed to faith whose essence is of the nature of trust, but it was also in Buddhist circles that *bhakti*, a loving devotion or faith, first grew up from the loving devotion to the great Master who was a real personality. The other Indian religions had in pre-Buddhistic times nothing corresponding to faith like *āgāpy*. The word *bhakti* scarcely occurs before the epic period and occurs only in one late Upanishad, in which it is not love but devotion to a fearful god before whom one comes in fear just as in the other Upanishads. It is in the Buddhistic works of the 4th century that the word *bhakti* first appears. The Buddha says in one place in the *Madhyama Nikāya* that those who have not even entered the paths are sure to reach the goal “ if they have love and faith towards me.” It was through faith in the Buddha that Vaidehi, the consort of King Bimbisara, found consolation. It is through faith in the Buddha that the Japanese Buddhist relies upon Amita Buddha with his whole heart for his salvation in the future and rejects all ritual and observances and keeps the laws laid down for his duty. Faith, conceived as confidence or trust, is the mother of all activities towards the realization of an ideal.

People fancy that they can look for Buddhism in books and scriptures. It is no doubt true that the Buddhists all over the world possess books, called the *Tripitaka*, which are divided into *Sutra*, *Vinaya*, and *Abhidharma* ; the first containing the conversations of the Buddha with some one of his audience, the second the discipline established by him for his ordained disciples, and the last the discussions by known authors on philosophical subjects. But ever since the earliest times the Buddhist brotherhood has been divided into many schools and sects. There have been four *nikāyas* and eighteen sects. The members of one and the same *nikāya* have never been in perfect agreement among themselves, not to speak of their disagreement with the other groups. Traditions have been opposed to traditions. In each sect again there have been Sautrāntikas, Vaināyikas, and Ābhidharmikas. The Sautrāntikas and the Ābhidharmikas of one and the same sect have never agreed with each other, and

the Sautrāntikas of one sect have been opposed by those of a rival sect. Even at the present day the Buddhists may be classified into three groups: the Southern, who abide in Ceylon, Burma, Siam and Anam; the Northern, who live in Tibet, China, Manchuria, Mongolia, and Siberia; and the Eastern, who are found in Japan and Formosa. The southern Buddhists follow the Hīnayāna or the Lesser Vehicle; the northern are Lamaistic and highly ritualistic; and the easterns are followers of the Mahāyāna or the Greater Vehicle. Now the Tripiṭaka of the Hīnayānikas is not the same as that of the Mahāyānikas. Neither the Mahāyānists nor the Hīnayānists use the tongue in which Lord Buddha preached, the widely diffused dialect of Kosala, where he was born and brought up. Which of these schools then has really preserved the *ipsissima verba* of the Teacher? No one will assert that the Sutrapiṭaka was compiled at the first *Saṅgīti* (council), which was held immediately after the Buddha's death. Various facts point to the gradual formation of the present Sutrapiṭaka, as it exists either in Pali or in Chinese. Nor have we any reason to suppose that its most original form is preserved in the present Pali version. The research into the Chinese Tripiṭaka has shown the untenability of the superior claims of the Pali version.\* In this maze what shall be our guide? There is only one way out of the difficulty, and that is the one pointed out by the author of *Sikshāsamucchaya*: "*Yadkinchid subhāshitam tad sarvam buddhabhāshitam*. Whatsoever is rightly spoken and free from error, that is the teaching of the Buddha." Nothing can be the teaching of the Lord which does not conform to reason and experience. Such was also the dictum laid down by the Council of Vaisālī, which met a hundred years after the death of the Master to settle the disputes between the rival sects into which the Buddhist community had become split up. The mind of the Buddhist must ever be moving forward, questioning, sifting, discussing, weighing. He must not sit tight in unreasoned conviction that somebody else's unsupported statements are true, or that truth was crystallised years ago by an elder, whether he be Asvagoshā or Buddhagoshā, or by a Council of five hundred. He must perpetually work to widen the field of knowledge discarding the irrelevant, the second-hand, the traditional, if their value has been proved to have evaporated.

\* See *Some Problems of the Textual History of Buddhist Scriptures* by Prof. Anesaki-Mahasar.

From new revelations he must perpetually extract larger revelations of truth that stand the fullest test of reason and satisfy the whole being of man. This was the way of the Buddha,\* in which there was no room for the authority (*śabda*) of any book. This was also the way of the leading Buddhist thinkers, who always gave a conspectus of their views and interpreted them, not on the authority of the Sūtras which are commonly regarded as the basis of their religion, but by having regard to the general validity of ideas and to logical and psychological laws.\* As the Chinese Buddhist reformer, Lo-tsu, has said: "The true unwritten book is always rotating. All heaven and earth are repeating words of truth. The true book is not outside of man's life. The Dharma that is invisible manifests itself spontaneously and needs no book."

Apparently many are the ways shown by the Lord to the *summum bonum*, but truly speaking there is only one way (*ekayāna*) and that is the way of reason (*tattvayāna*). From a practical point of view one may distinguish three means. These means are, in plain language, piety, philosophy, and striving for the welfare of one's fellow beings. These are respectively designated by the terms *Srāvakayāna*, *Pratyekabuddhayāna*, and *Bodhisattvayāna*. Higher than the simple piety of the *srāvaka* or *upāsaka*, who, under the guidance of a Buddha, becomes an *arahat*, is the self-acquired enlightenment of the *Pratyekabuddha*; higher than this enlightenment for one's own salvation is the unselfish devotion of the *bodhisattva*, who, out of infinite love (*mahā karuṇā*), desires supreme happiness for others and, therefore, devotes himself to their spiritual elevation, desisting from entering into Nirvāṇa. The highest unity which embraces all these three is that of the *samyak sambuddha*, who, like Gautama Sākyamunī, enters into Nirvāṇa and becomes the universal teacher and saviour of the world. That such is the manner in which the so-called vehicles are to be understood is shown by the parable in the *Saddharmapundarīka Sūtra* of a man who, seeing his house on fire and his children playing unconcernedly within it, induces them to come out by the promise of toys. Here the Tathāgata is the father who sees his children playing in the consuming fire of worldliness and employs different expedients to bring them out of this burning house and lead them to the safe asylum of Nirvāṇa. These different *yānas* prove the

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\* See Wassilejeff's *Buddhismus* (p. 288).

universality of Buddhism, making it suitable for the highest as well as the lowest order of intelligence ; the former being supplied with the religion of the intellect and the latter with the religion of the emotions.

Some of the popular phases of Buddhism, such as reverence paid to the Master's relics and images and the frequent invocation of the name of Amita, seem to conflict with its highly rationalistic character. But it must not be forgotten that the religion of the common people is never a true picture of the religion they profess. For every Buddhist the supreme principle of life is the love of Dharmakāya, the ultimate moral reality towards which all human beings aspire.

In every form of Buddhism the road to the attainment of the *summum bonum* lies always through the contemplation of the Four Great Truths and the pursuit of the Noble Eightfold Path. But, as I-tsing, the Chinese pilgrim, remarks, " the meaning of the truths is so profound that it is a matter beyond the comprehension of vulgar minds, while the ablution of the holy image is practicable to all. Though the Great Teacher has entered Nirvāṇa, yet his image exists, and we should revere it with zeal as though in his very presence. Those who constantly offer incense and flowers to it are enabled to purify their thoughts, and those who frequently bathe this image are enabled to overcome their sins that involve them in darkness." In the same strain said the Regent of Tibet to Col. Younghusband : " When Buddhists look upon an image of the Buddha, they put aside thoughts of strife, and think only of peace." If the life of the Blessed One gives to the simple and weak more than philosophy gives to the wise, why should they not revere his image ? The image\* of the Buddha combines in its appearance wisdom, benevolence and victory—the wisdom of a philosopher, the benevolence of a redeemer and the triumph of a hero. All perfections are collected in the holy image—perfect power, perfect virtue, infinite compassion, infinite boldness, infinite knowledge. It is not the image or relic that is adored, but the Dharmakāya, which for human frailty is represented by the image or relic. But in the reverence paid to the images or the relics of the Blessed One there is no implication of grace, of Providence, of recompense effected by a God, or of succour furnished by a saviour. On the other hand such a notion is categorically discarded by the Buddhists. As the commentator

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\*The image of Buddha has a face and limbs as beautiful as possible.—*Bṛihat Samhita* of Varahmihira.

on the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* says: “*Sukhasya dhukkasya no kopi dāta, parodadātīti kubuddhirēsha*. It is a foolish idea to suppose that another can cause us happiness or misery.” The result of devotion is independent of the object worshipped and is entirely subjective. Says Nāgasena, in *Milindapanha*: “Men by offering reverence to the relics of the jewel treasure of the wisdom of the Tathāgata, though he has died away and accepts it not, cause goodness to arise within them, and by that assuage and allay the torment of the threefold fire.” What one may adore, what one may worship, matters little; what matters is the heart and devotion with which one worships. Devotion is beneficial and salutary, because it favours humility and destroys the thought of self.

The difference between the devotion and worship of the Buddhist and the Hindu is seen in the contrast between a Burmese and a Hindu temple. “The one has its images of the Buddha serene and placid, reflecting on the illusions of this life, and crying from myriad shrines: “Heal your wounds ye wounded, and eat your fill, you hungry. Rest, ye weary, and ye who are thirsty, quench your thirst. Look up to the light, ye that sit in darkness. Be of good cheer, ye that are forlorn.” The other has its obscene symbols, its monstrous idols, its incarnations of lust and evil, that are to be appeased only by the shedding of blood. See the Temple of Kali in Calcutta and the Temple of Buddha in Rangoon, and you have a contrast that all the metaphysics of the subtle Hindu mind cannot reconcile with pure faith. You approach the Kali temple through reeking abominations, and behold a pit out of which flows an endless stream of unclad humanity. A wild and dark rabble, sweating the rancid oil of cocoanut, they look like lost souls vomited from the depths of hell, fleeing from the wrath of the hideous image whose foul face glows through the blackness. To the Temple of Buddha you ascend by marble stairs, and behold a tower of gold crowned with flashing gems and golden bells that tinkle in the sunlight. The worshippers are arrayed in shimmering silks, and bring flowers and tapers of bees’ wax—not the blood of goats—to lay at the feet of the serene Buddha. This is the contrast in creed and worship, and it is written everywhere on the land and on the people throughout India and Burma.”

In these days of scientific temperament the Positivists have found it necessary to represent in their churches the ideal of humanity by the figure of a mother with a child in her arms.



So did the Buddhists of old in carrying enlightenment to barbaric peoples find it necessary to represent by images such qualities as charity and compassion, mercy and benevolence, love and wisdom. If the Positivists kneel before the figure of humanity, in the same spirit do the Buddhists kneel before Manjuṣrī, Avalokitēśvara, or Tāra.\* If the Positivist service consists in reading some part of Auguste Comte's writings and offering prayers to humanity, much more reasonable is the three part service of Asvagosha, which begins with singing a hymn in praise of the *Triratna*, is followed by the reading of a selection from the Buddha's words, and ends finally with a hymn expressing a wish to bring one's good merit to maturity. Just as the Buddha resorted to tales and parables as a means of moral and spiritual instruction, so did also the Buddhist philosophers employ the imagination as an instrument for the spiritual elevation of ordinary mankind. But it is evident from their philosophical works that they did not themselves believe in the reality of their fanciful creations. Among such creations are to be included the various *Dhyāni-bodhisattvas* and *Dhyāni-buddhas*. The former enabled Buddhism to coalesce readily with the pre-existing religions of the various peoples to whom it passed, though such coalition not infrequently proved disastrous to the Dharma itself by making it lose its specific features. By the application of one of their fundamental doctrines, namely, the Jātaka theory, the Buddhists transformed the gods of the peoples they came in contact with into Bodhisattvas or Avatāras of the primordial Buddha. The Dhyāni-buddhas are supposed to represent the ideal counterpart of the actual Buddhas. Amitābha, the ideal counterpart of the historic Gautama Buddha, is regarded as dwelling in Sukhāvatī, the land of bliss, but represents nothing more than the infinite light dwelling in the hearts of men, which, if followed, will lead to the blissful port of Nirvāṇa. As pointed out by Dr. Edkins in his *Chinese Buddhism*, the founder of the Yün-tsi school explains Amitābha as figurative in his commentary on the *Amitābha Sutra*. "According to this explanation, the Western Paradise

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\* Manjuṣrī is the personification of wisdom and is represented as riding on a lion which symbolises boldness, bravery, and a fresh, eager and advancing spirit. Samantabhadra is the personification of action and is represented as riding on an elephant which symbolises care, caution, gentleness and a weighty dignity. Avalokitesvara represents infinite mercy, infinite pity, salvation from misery and woe. One form of Avalokitesvara is a female figure bearing a child in her arms, known as Kwanyin in China. Tāra is a personification of *pragnā*.

means the moral nature, confirmed, pure and at rest. Amitābha means the mind, clear and enlightened. The rows of trees mean the mind cultivating the virtues. The music means the harmony of virtues in the mind. The flowers and, particularly, the lotus, mean the mind opening to consciousness and intelligence. The beautiful birds mean the mind becoming changed and renovated." When the Japanese Buddhist invokes the name of Amida (a contraction of Amitābha), he does so in order to express his gratitude and thankfulness for the mercy of the Buddha and the succeeding elders whose teachings have been benevolent and welcome as light in a dark night. But all cult of adoration is foreign, not to say antagonistic, to the most elementary principles of Buddhism. As the author of the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* says: "*Hitāsamsana mātrena buddhapuja visishyate*. It is by the practice of good deeds we render to Buddha the most perfect adoration." In another verse the same author interprets the worship of the Tathāgata as the getting rid of the sorrows of the world and giving happiness to all beings. In the same strain says the author of *Jātakamāla*: "Worship consists in fulfilling the design of the person honoured, not in offerings of perfumes, garlands, and the like." Similarly says the author of *Bhaktisataka*: "O Buddha, the worship of thee consists in doing good to the world."

King Milinda asks Bhikshu Nagasena why the Bhikshus concern themselves with the recitation of, and asking questions about, the discourses and the pieces in mixed prose and verse, and the expositions, and the poems, and the outbursts of emotion, and the passages beginning with 'Thus he said,' and the birth-stories, and the tales of wonder, and the extended treatises; why they trouble themselves about new buildings, about gifts and offerings to the Saṅgha Nagasena's answer is very significant. Recitations, asking questions, superintending building work, seeing to gifts and offerings—each of these is of great good to one or other of the spiritual objects which the brethren seek to obtain. Those who do these things are working towards the attainment of Arahatsip. Those of the brethren who are pure by nature, those upon whose hearts an impression has been left by previous good deeds, can become Arahats in a moment, but those whose minds are much darkened by evil find these things of great assistance in attaining Arahatsip. When all men shall have become by nature pure, then will there be no need for such things, no need for discipleship, and nothing left for a Buddha to accomplish.

It is the purity of heart that forms the essence of the religious life. When Emperor Wu of Liang asked the patriarch Bodhidharma how much merit he had accumulated by building many monasteries, copying numerous sacred sutras and making many converts, the holy man curtly replied : " No merit whatsoever."

Not infrequently people confound the Buddhist *triṣaṇas*, or the vows of taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṅgha, with what is ordinarily called prayer. In Buddhism there is no such thing as prayer. The Blessed One rejects all prayer for an object, which, as George Meredith says, is " the cajolery of an idol, the resource of superstition." For the Buddhist, as Lo-tsu remarks, the sound of running water, the rustle of the leaves as the wind plays through them, the movement of the clouds in the sky, and the manifold life and activity of the creatures of the jungle, constitute a great chant ; they are so many hymns of praise to the great truths embodied by the life of his Master. In the place of prayer the Buddhist has *pranidhāna*. But this is no begging. It is only a self-discipline which is capable of producing nothing more than subjective results. No more is expected from it than what Kant speaks of as the natural effects of prayer, namely, that the dark and confused ideas present in the mind are either clarified, or that they receive a higher degree of intensity, or that the motives of a virtue receive greater efficacy. The following from the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* shows clearly the exact nature of this *pranidhāna* : " May I be a balm to the sick, their healer and servitor, until sickness ceases to exist : may I with plenty of food and drink quench the anguish of hunger and thirst ; may I become an unfailing store for the poor, and serve them with manifold things for their need. My own being and my pleasures, all my righteousness in the past, present and future I surrender indifferently, that all creatures may win to their end. Nirvāṇa lies in the surrender of all things, and my mind is after Nirvāṇa ; if I must surrender all, it is best to give it for fellow creatures. I yield myself to all living beings to deal with me as they desire ; they may smite or revile me for ever, bestrew me with dust, play with my body, laugh and wanton ; I have given them my body, why shall I feel anxious ? Let them make me do whatever works bring them pleasure ; but may never mishap befall any of them by reason of me. If any be wroth or pleased with me, may that be ever a cause for them to gain all their ends. May all who slander me, or do me hurt, or jeer at me, gain a share in enlightenment. I would be a

protector of the unprotected, a guide of wayfarers, a ship, a dyke, and a bridge for them who seek the further shore, a lamp for them who need a lamp, a bed for them who need a bed, a slave for all beings who need a slave. I would be a magic gem, a lucky jar, a spell of power, a sovereign balm, a wishing-tree, a cow of plenty for all beings. As the earth and other elements are for the various service of the countless creatures dwelling in the whole of space, so may I in various ways support the whole sphere of life in space, until all be at peace."

Rationality and sanity are in evidence in all points of Buddhism. The Buddha does not claim superiority by virtue of any transcendental peculiarity of his nature, surpassing everything terrestrial. It may be true that one of the eighteen sects, the *Lokottaravādīna*, contend that the Tathāgata is not subject to worldly laws. But this is a small minority. No hyperphysical superiority belongs to the Buddha by virtue of his birth; only being greater and more strenuous in his efforts he has traced out the path of salvation. The Buddha himself has clearly told us how he became a Buddha by a course of moral preparation and by the acquirement of the necessary knowledge, which it is in the power of every mortal to attain by a severe struggle. The Buddha did not say: "You must not trust to yourself. You must depend wholly on me. You cannot be righteous except through a power implanted in you from above;" but he has repeated times without number: "You must trust to yourselves. You can take nothing from me. You must be righteous through your own efforts. You have to depend on yourselves for the final getting rid of all selfishness and hence all suffering." In his last moments he spoke to Ānanda as follows: "Surely, Ānanda, should there be any one who harbours the thought, 'It is I who will lead the brotherhood,' or 'the Order is dependent on me,' it is he who should lay down instructions in any matter concerning the Order. The Tathāgata thinks not, Ānanda, that he should lead the Brotherhood or the Brotherhood is dependent on him. Why, then, should he leave instruction in any matter concerning the Order? Therefore, O Ānanda, be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye refuges to yourselves. Hold fast to the Dharma as a lamp. Hold fast as a refuge to the Dharma. Look not for refuge to any one beside yourselves." The Blessed One never insisted on the sinfulness and weakness of man, but always inspired his followers with confidence in their innate goodness and strength. Hence the Buddhist looks for salvation, not

through the redemption of a supernatural being, but by self-exertion and self-illumination.

Another testimony of the rationality of Buddhism is its attitude towards miracles and wonders. That in a religion which recognises no supernatural or extramundane god there can be no miraculous interference from outside nature needs no special proof. Nevertheless the possibility of acquiring wonderful powers by wholly natural means is not denied. The Buddha is described in the legend as acquiring the six *abhijñās* with the attainment of perfect enlightenment. Further, the legend speaks of the concurrence of wonderful natural phenomena, such as earthquakes and thunderstorms, with events of extraordinary ethical significance. Still the disciples of the Buddha are not permitted under any circumstances to work wonders or boast of supernatural powers to raise themselves in the esteem of others. The legend says that Pinḍola, being challenged by heretics to work a miracle, flew up into the air, and brought down an alms-bowl which had been fixed on a pole. The Buddha reproved him for this, and forbade his disciples to work miracles for display. On one occasion some of his adherents entreated the Buddha to permit his missionaries to work wonders, as that would elevate them in the eyes of others. The Buddha replied as follows:\*

“There are three kinds of miracles. The first is the miracle of power, in which extraordinary power is manifested, as in walking on water, exercising devils, raising the dead and so forth. When the believer sees such things his faith may become deepened, but it would not convince the unbeliever, who might think that these things are done by the aid of magic. I therefore see danger in such miracles, and I regard them as shameful and repulsive. The second is the miracle of prophecy, such as thought-reading, sooth-saying, fortune-telling, etc. Here also there would be disappointment, for these too in the eyes of the unbeliever would be no better than extraordinary magic. The last is the miracle of instruction. When any of my disciples brings round a man by instruction to rightly employ his intellectual and ethical powers, that is the true miracle.” Conversion by miracle, by oratory, through sorrow or emotional exhaustion, cannot be permanent, and is therefore equivalent to no conversion at all. Hence, the Blessed One, without denying the possibility of conversion by fortuitous accidents (*saṃvega*), forbids the making of converts by all other means than argument and instruction.

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\* Keṃadda Sutta.

What methods the Blessed One employed when he was expected to work a miracle is clearly shown by the interesting legend of Kīṣāgotamī. Kīṣāgotamī, a young woman, had an only son, and he died. In her grief she carried the corpse from house to house, asking for medicine. The people reproved her saying: "You have lost your senses; you are asking medicine for your dead boy." At last one man advised her to go to Sākyamuni, the Buddha, who was the Great Physician that could give aid to all. So Kīṣāgotamī repaired to the Blessed One and implored him to give the medicine that would cure her boy. The Buddha answered: "I shall cure your boy, if you bring a handful of mustard seed from a house where no one has lost a child, husband, parent or friend." So she wandered from door to door, and the people, through pity, readily offered her mustard seed. But when she questioned if a son or daughter, a father or mother had died in the family, the answer she received everywhere was: "Alas! the living are only few, but the dead are many." All day long she wandered through the city, and at last when night set in she began to think: "Ah, it is a difficult task. I thought that my son alone died, but in this city the dead are more numerous than the living.

"This is the law not only for villages or towns,  
Not for one family is this the law;  
For all the wide worlds, both of men and gods,  
This is the law—that all must pass away."

When she thought so, her selfish affection for her child disappeared. She went to the forest, buried the child, and returned to the Blessed One. The Holy One comforted her by preaching to her the Dharma, which serves, as a soothing balm to all troubled hearts.

"Count all life a thing unstable,  
Loss of friends inevitable.  
Cherish all that are alive  
Sorrow not shouldst thou survive."

Of Buddhism alone can it be affirmed that it is free from all fanaticism. Its aim being to produce in every man a thorough internal transformation by self-culture and self-conquest, how can it have recourse to might or money or even persuasion for effecting conversion? The Tathāgata has only shown the way to salvation, and it is left to each individual to decide for himself if he would follow it. Every religion ministers to certain needs

and inclinations, and, however superstitious it may appear at first sight, it is still the outward expression of certain elementary instincts and therefore contains some germs of truth. Buddhism endeavours to point out those germs of truth and nourish them by giving a new and better interpretation. The Master has said :

“ Revere your own, revile no brother’s faith.  
 The light you see is from Nirvāṇa’s sun,  
 Whose rising splendours promise perfect day.  
 The feeble rays that light your brother’s path  
 Are from the self-same sun, by falsehoods hid,  
 The lingering shadows of the passing night.”

Accordingly the Buddhist kings of the world have been the most tolerant and benign. Emperor Asoka, though an ardent Buddhist himself, showered his gifts on the Brāhmins, the Jains, the Ājīvakas as well as the Buddhists. In his twelfth rock-edict Asoka says : “ Whosoever raises his own sect to the skies, and disparages all other sects from special attachment to his own with a view to encourage it, does thereby much harm to his own sect.” The Buddhist kings of Ceylon in the Middle Ages were kind and considerate to the followers of the other faiths that then prevailed in their country. The Pāla kings of Bengal, who were zealous Buddhists, bestowed gifts also upon the Brāhmins. But the Brāhmins not only persecuted the Buddhists but make a boast of their persecutions. King Pushyamitra, who adored and sacrificed to the Devas, destroyed in the second century B.C. many Sanghārāmas and killed the bhikshus who dwelt therein. A century after Kanishka, Vikramāditya, king of Srāvashti, became a persecutor of the Buddhists. Mihirakula, a worshipper of Siva, slaughtered countless followers of the Buddha. Sasānka, Raja of Bengal, proved in the middle of the seventh century A.D. an inveterate enemy of Buddhism and endeavoured a number of times to uproot the Bodhi tree. In Kashmir Kshemagupta and Sri Harsha were ruthless in their dealings with the Buddhists. At the instance of Kumārila Bhatta the Buddhists were driven out of Kerala. According to the *San̄karaviṇaya* King Sudhanvan issued the following injunction to his people : “ From the bridge (of Rāma in Ceylon) to the Himālayas, who does not slay the Buddhists, both old and young, shall be slain.” The mere fact of entering a Buddhist sanctuary is reckoned in the Vrihannāradiya Purāṇa as a sin for which there is no forgiveness. Sūlapāṇi, the great founder of the Bengal school of law, made the very sight

of a Buddhist atonable by the most severe penances. According to the *Anubhāgavatā*, an *Upapurāṇa*, specially devoted to the subject of *Kalkiavatār*, the coming avatār of Vishnu, the first expedition of Kalki will be against the Buddhas in Kikata. Even the Jains, who have been noted for their *ahimsa* doctrine, have been intolerant to the Buddhists. Through the instrumentality of Akalankadeva, a Jain teacher from Sravana Belligola, the Buddhists were expelled from the court of Himāsitala at Kanchi. Vara Pandya of Madura, on becoming a Jain, is said to have persecuted the Buddhists, subjecting them to personal tortures and banishing them from the country. In China the Buddhists were thrice persecuted very severely by the Confucianists.\* Nor did Buddhism escape persecution at the hands of the Japanese Shintoists. Islam† was perpetuated by persecution and bloodshed. Christianity has cost two thousand years of war, persecution, millions of money and thousands of human lives. But Buddhism, even where it was persecuted, has never persecuted in return. Nowhere in the Buddhist books do we find such sentiments as are breathed by the following: "But these mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay before me." "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words . . . it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them." Compare with these words the following admonition of the Blessed One in the *Saddharmapundarīka Sutra*: "The strength of charity is my abode; the apparel of forbearance is my robe; and voidness (selflessness) is my seat: let (the preacher) take his stand on this and preach. When clods, sticks, pikes, or abusive words, or threats fall to the lot of the preacher, let him be patient thinking of me." The model placed before the Buddhist preacher is Purṇa, an emancipated slave, who, after becoming a rich merchant, renounced everything and became a bhikshu. When he was informed of the perils of his enterprise to preach the Dharma to a wild tribe, he replied: "When I am reproached, I shall think within myself that these are certainly good people, since they do not beat me. If they begin to beat me with fists, I shall think they are mild and good, because they do not beat me with clubs. If they proceed to this, I shall think that they are

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\* Wilhelm Grube: *Religion und kultus der Chinesen*, p. 146.

† In the Mahomedan invasion of Behar the Pathan soldiers under the Afghan general Bhaktyar Khilji ruthlessly killed all the Buddhist bhiksus in the monastery of Odantapuri.—See *Indian history from Mahomedan sources*, translated by Elliot.



excellent, for they do not strike me dead. If they kill me, I shall die saying : ' How good they are in freeing me from this miserable body.' " Of this universal forgiveness, of this passing of no judgment on transgressors, the practical result is tolerance.

The missionary impulse of Buddhism is a product *sui generis*. It is wholly foreign to Brahmanism ; the Brahman loves and lives a lonely supercilious life. On the other hand, the Buddhist cannot do without propagating his faith. The psychology of Buddhism leads to those universal relations between man and man, which are summed up in the idea of brotherhood. And it is this universal idea which produces the universal feeling termed the missionary motive. Of all gifts the gift of the Dharma is the greatest. " Go ye, O bhikshus, for the benefit of the many, for the welfare of mankind, out of compassion for the world. Preach the doctrine which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle, and glorious in the end, in the spirit as well as in the letter. There are beings whose eyes are scarcely covered with dust, but if the doctrine is not preached to them they cannot attain salvation. Proclaim to them a life of holiness. They will understand the doctrine and accept it." Such were the loving words addressed by the Exalted One to his disciples. In strict accordance with this mandate, the disciples of the Great Teacher have always considered others first and themselves afterwards. Forgetful of home, ready to meet death, indifferent to renown or failure, they have laboured to open the eyes of the crowds deceived by false teaching. To spread the holy doctrine they travelled over lands and seas, crossed through snowy mountains and sandy deserts, braved all toils and dangers. The names of Kumārajīva, Fā Hian, Yuan Chuang, Hui Shen, Dipānkara Srignāna are sufficient evidence of the strength and enthusiasm which the Dharma can inspire into the minds of its adherents. Not to adventitious state influence but to its spiritual potency and superior faculty of transmission is due the rapid spread of the Dharma in the lands to which it has been carried.

Without the aid of the sword, or Maxim guns, or howitzers, Buddhism carried its message of peace and goodwill to the barbarous hordes of the most populous parts of Asia and civilized them. " How a religion which taught," says Max Muller, " the annihilation of all existence, of all individuality and personality as the highest object of all endeavours, could have laid hold of the minds of millions of human beings, and how, at the same time, by enforcing the duties of morality, justice, kindness, and self-

sacrifice, it could have exercised a decidedly beneficial influence not only on the natives of India, but on the lowest barbarians of Central Asia, is a riddle which no one has been able to solve." But the riddle is by no means insolvable, if due regard is paid to the absence of dogmatism and the spirit of tolerance that characterizes the religion of the Blessed Teacher. It was its benign tolerance that enabled Buddhism to accommodate itself to the minds and ways of animistic and ancestor-worshipping races and vastly elevate them in the scale of civilization. Without its character of universality the Dharma would never have been capable of developing those marvellous faculties of assimilation which we observe in its attitude to the Bon in Tibet, the Tao in China, the Shinto in Japan, the Nāt in Burma, and the Prēta in Ceylon. It is its character of being an *āgama*, a preparation for the attainment of truth, and not a dogmatic religion like Christianity or Islam, that gives Buddhism sufficient breadth and suppleness to comprehend theism as well as atheism, monism as well as dualism, polytheism and pantheism, fetichism and animism, idolatry and iconomachy, contemplative quietists and boisterous jumpers, gods and demons, saints and heroes, higher beings and lower beings, worlds above and worlds below, heavens and hells ; and yet makes it the one religion which imposes no dogma or article of faith on any of its followers. If, on the whole, the underlying spirit leads to a beautiful and noble life, and manifests itself in kindness, charity and tolerance, in forbearance and forgiveness, in fortitude and cheerfulness, in a sense of the largeness and mystery of things, why should not a little superstition be permitted ?

Among religions Buddhism is the only one that breathes a spirit of unbounded generosity and compassion for all beings. Nowhere in the life of the Buddha do we come across the drowning of pigs by handing them over to devils, or the cursing of fig trees for not bearing fruit out of season, or the whipping of innocent money-changers. "The purpose of the Tathāgata in coming into the world," says the Chinese Dharmapāda, "is to befriend the poor and helpless and unprotected,—to nourish those in bodily affliction, whether they be followers of the Dharma or any other religion—to help the impoverished, the orphan, and the aged—and by so doing and persuading others so to do, the consequent merit is so great that all his former vows are accomplished, and he attains the great goal of all life." Buddhism has therefore always shrunk from inflicting pain even in self-defence.

Not only did it teach that knowledge (*pragnā*) without benevolence (*maitrī*) is barren, but it carried out this teaching so consistently in practice as even to endanger its own existence. It has always deprecated war between nation and nation. It has constantly discouraged capital punishment. It sought everywhere to abolish bloody sacrifices. As the *Mahāvastu* says, it is the advent of the Buddha that put an end to *asvamēdham*, *purushamēdham*, *pundarikam* and other kinds of abominable sacrifices in India.

A tangible way in which a religion manifests its actual influence upon civilization is [art]. The great glory of Buddhism is that it has always ministered to the satisfaction of æsthetic aspirations. Wherever Buddhism has prevailed, artistic pagodas, vast vihāras, beautiful stupas have come into existence. Some of the Buddhist carvings are the finest that India has yet produced and are masterpieces in point of style and technique, unsurpassed, in the opinion of Mr. J. H. Marshall, the Director of the Archæological Survey of India, by any of their kind in the ancient world. The finest buildings in China and Japan are the Buddhist temples. The beauty and charm of the frescoes of Ajanta, painted by artists, whom Mr. J. Griffiths regards as giants in execution, serve as monumental proofs of the wonderful inspiration which the religion of the Tathāgata imparted to art.\* What other religion has filled its votaries with that devotion and energy which finds its outward expression in the magnificent shrine of Boro-Budūr in Java? According to Messrs. C. Arnold and Frost, America's first great architects were Buddhist immigrants from Java and Indo-China. Brahmanism had no art of its own in India, and the plastic arts of Vaishnavism and Saivism are the bastard children of the sculpture of the Buddhist bhikshus. As Dr. Grünwedel† says, "the figurative part of Brahman art, so far as we are now acquainted with it, is based essentially upon Buddhist elements—so much so indeed that the Saiva figures which originated at the same time as the Northern Buddhist, appear to have fixed types, whilst the iconography of the Vishnu cult embraces chiefly Buddhist elements to which different interpretation has been given.‡ But still more dependent on Buddhism are the representations of Jaina arts." Similarly says

\* "Wherever Buddhism prevailed," says Taranatha in his *History of Buddhism* (Schiefner's German translation), "skilful religious artists were found, where the Tīrthya (Hindu) doctrines prevailed, unskilful artists came to the front."

† *Buddhistische Kunst in Indien*.

‡ See A. Foucher : *Etude sur l'iconographie Bouddhique de l'Inde*, pp. 8, 9.

Mr. B. B. Havell : " It seems, indeed, as if all that is best in Hindu art, both in painting and sculpture, is a direct inheritance from Buddhism." The Buddhist endeavours to unite the utmost attainable beauty in nature and art, not with the desire to produce popular effect or to provide attractions for the pilgrim, but to register his spiritual values in art forms. In satisfying the æsthetic aspirations of its adherents Buddhism has in no way deviated from its fundamental principles. For the Buddhist all enjoyment is negative, and only by the perpetuation of this negation can selfishness be destroyed. In the appreciation of the artistic and the beautiful one loses one's self. Hence a fostering of the love of the beautiful cannot but minister to individual salvation, and the promotion of art necessarily serves as a means of universal salvation.

Not only for the arts, such as architecture and sculpture, painting and engraving, is India indebted to Buddhism, but also for science and culture in general. The best era of Indian medicine was contemporary with the ascendancy of Buddhism. The ancient Brahmins might have derived the rudiments of anatomy from the dissection of animals in sacrifices. But the true schools of Indian medicine rose in the public hospitals established in every city by Asoka and other Buddhist kings in accordance with the injunction of the Buddha that whosoever would wait on him should wait on the sick. Charaka, the author of the well-known *Charakasaṃhita*, was the court physician of the Buddhist king Kanishka. Nāgārjuna infused new life into the science of Āyur Veda. To his lofty intellect and extensive scholarship India owes the revised edition of *Suśruta* now in use. The latter part of Suśruta's treatise, which bears the name of *Uttaratantra*, is entirely the work of Nāgārjuna's independent research and thought. In the spirit of a true Buddhist Nāgārjuna popularised the science of Āyur Veda by teaching it without reserve to all classes without distinction of caste. Even to this day the book on Ayur Veda read by beginners is the work of Vāgbhata, a Buddhist. Nāgārjuna also discovered the processes of distillation, sublimation, etc., and thus gave a stimulus to the development of chemical science (*rasāyana vidyā*) in India. Faithful Buddhist kings sought always to give practical proofs of their religious zeal, piety and wisdom by constructing large irrigation works and public roads. Thus engineering received a new stimulus. Dīṅnāga and his disciple Dharmakīrti gave a new impulse to Indian logic by their books on *Pramāṇa*.

Vararuchi, Jayāditya, Vāmana, Chandra wrote on grammar. Vyādi and Amarasinha produced lexicons. All sciences and arts were studied in the chief centres of Buddhist civilization, such as the great Buddhist university of Nālandā. According to the great orientalist Theodore Benfey the very bloom of the intellectual life of India, whether it found expression in Buddhist or Brahmanical works, proceeded substantially from the Dharma, and was contemporaneous with the period in which Buddhism flourished. "The noblest survivals of Buddhism in India," says Sir W. W. Hunter, "are to be found, however, not among any peculiar body, but in the religion of the people; in that principle of the brotherhood of man, with the reassertion of which each new revival of Hinduism starts; in the asylum which the great Vaishnava sect affords to women, who have fallen victims to caste rules, to the widow and the outcaste; in that gentleness and charity to all men, which take the place of a poor law in India, and give a high significance to the half satirical epithet of the 'mild' Hindu."

When Buddhism took root in China, it started a new development and gave such a great impetus to Confucianism as to produce in it some deep thinkers like Luh Siang San, Chu Tze and Wan Yang Ming. Wherever Buddhism entered into the life of a people, it always gave them refinement and embellishment. In his *Things Japanese* Prof. Basil Hall Chamberlain says: "All education was for centuries in Buddhist hands, as was the care of the poor and sick. Buddhism introduced art, introduced medicine, moulded the folklore of the country, created the dramatic poetry, deeply influenced politics and every sphere of social and intellectual activity. In a word Buddhism was the teacher under whose instruction the Japanese nation grew up." Similarly writes Lafcadio Hearn: "Unquestionably the influence which Buddhism exerted upon Japanese civilization was immense, profound, multiform, incalculable . . . it became as much an official religion as Shinto itself, and influenced the lives of the highest classes not less than the lives of the poor. It made monks of emperors and nuns of their daughters; it decided the conduct of rulers and the administration of laws . . . But the religion of the Buddha brought to Japan another and a wider humanizing influence, a new gospel of tenderness. In the highest meaning of the term it was a civilizing power. Besides teaching new respect for life, the duty of kindness to animals as well as to all human beings, it actually gave to Japan the arts and industries



instruction in a cabinet; dry, dusty, lifeless, but awful to the beholder and useful to the owner. Again does Buddhism lose in the comparison from an intellectual point of view when set beside the mazy gropings of the Upanishads? We have shown that dogma was the base of primal pantheism; of real logic there is not a whit. We admire the spirit of the teachers in the Upanishads, but we have very little respect for the logical ability of any early Hindu teachers; that is to say, there is very little of it to admire. The doctors of the Upanishad philosophy were poets, not dialecticians. Poetry indeed waned in the extreme south, and no spirited or powerful literature ever was produced there, unless it was due to foreign influence, such as the religious poetry of Ramaism and the Tamil *Sittars*. But in secondary subtlety and in the marking of distinctions, in classifying and analysing on dogmatic premises, as well as in the acceptance of hearsay truths as ultimate verities—we do not see any fundamental disparity in these regards between the mind of the North-west and that of the South-east, and what superficial difference exists goes to the credit of Buddhism. For if one must have dogma, it is something to have system, and while precedent theosophy was based on the former it knew nothing of the latter. Moreover, in Buddhism there is a greater intellectual vigour than in any phase of Brahmanism (as distinct from Vedism). To cast off not only gods, but soul, and more, to deny the moral efficacy of asceticism, this was a leap into the void, to appreciate the daring of which one has but to read himself into the priestly literature of Buddha's rivals, both heterodox and orthodox. We see then in Buddhism neither a debauched moral type, nor a weakened intellectuality. The pessimism of Buddhism, so as it concerns earth, is not only the same pessimism that underlies the religious motive of Brahman pantheism, but it is the same pessimism that pervades Christianity and even Hebraism." As Prof. James puts it, the completest religions are those in which the pessimistic elements are best developed. If pessimism is the conviction that life teems with sufferings and miseries, this view is the common characteristic of all religions. But Buddhism alone teaches that, though there is no individuality and no bliss after death, one should be bold and calm, pure and loving, gentle and wise.

The influence of a religion is easily perceived in its effects on the manners and habits of a people. India rejected the greatest of her prophets, and what has been the consequence? The

result is revealed to us by a comparison of India with Burma, the nearest Buddhist country. India has become a rank garden of gross superstitions that flourish and multiply from day to day. The Burman too has his superstitions, he worships spirits (*nāts*) and conciliates them by sacrifices. But these are not superstitions which are degrading or opposed to good morality. The Burman has ever before his eyes the eightfold path of virtue which leads to the annihilation of suffering. He is taught that he will reap in future the seed sown now and in the past. Living by the teaching of the Blessed One that "not from weeping, not from grieving will any obtain peace of mind" (*Salla Sutta*), he faces his future prospect with a smile and his raiment of sunset hues is a proof of the mirth and lightness of his heart. The Hindu rarely manifests the joy of life and always wears the mask of melancholy and his sadness finds outward expression in his nakedness. For the Burman, nakedness is impure and revolting. Buddhism is a republic of religion, and all men are equal in its eyes. In Burma, there is neither Brahman nor Pariah, and no man is defiled by the presence or touch of his fellow. There is neither caste nor purdah. Woman do not hide themselves behind veils and shun the street as a pest. Infant marriage and enforced widowhood are eating the very vitals of Hindu society.

The tree is known by its fruits. Buddhism put reason in the place of authority; it discarded metaphysical speculation to make room for the practical realities of life; it raised the self-perfected sage to the position of the gods of theology; it set up a spiritual brotherhood in place of hereditary priesthood; it replaced scholasticism by a popular doctrine of righteousness; it introduced a communal life in the place of isolated anchorite life; it infused a cosmopolitan spirit against national exclusiveness. It instils faith stripped of dogmatism; it inspires enthusiasm freed from fanaticism; it gives strength bereft of violence; it rouses idealism uncoupled with visionariness; it evokes naturalness eschewing materialism; it allows liberty avoiding license; it demands self-sacrifice rejecting asceticism; it inculcates purity discarding austerities; it creates saintliness devoid of morbidity. Dogma and miracle are wisdom to the Christians; kismet and fanaticism are wisdom to the Moslem; caste and ceremonialism are wisdom to the Brahman; asceticism and nakedness are wisdom to the Jain; mysticism and magic are wisdom to the Taoist; formalism and outward piety are wisdom to the Confucian; ancestor-worship and loyalty to the Mikādo are wisdom to the



Shintoist ; but love and purity are the first wisdom to the Buddhist. To work out his salvation the Buddhist must renounce all selfish desires, and live to build up a character of which the outward signs are purity of heart, compassion for all, courage and wisdom born of calm insight into truth, and that tolerance and freedom of thought which does not hinder one's house-mates in possessing their beliefs in peace. Of Buddhism alone can it be said that it has discarded all animism, all dogmatism, all sensuality, all asceticism, all ceremonialism, that it consists in charity and benevolence, self-denial and self-consecration. It alone teaches that there is hope for man only in man, and that

" that love is false  
Which clings to love for selfish sweets of love."

### CHAPTER III

#### THE MORALITY OF BUDDHISM

THE goal of Buddhism is the freedom from sorrow and suffering. This cannot be attained except by the destruction of all selfish cravings. The self as such manifests its activity in *trishṇā* or grasping desire. If the self is to be annihilated, *trishṇā* must be suppressed. For the annihilation of an organ really consists in reducing the interval of time between two inhibitory states of that organ. Accordingly, if the self, considered as the organ producing sorrow and misery, is to be annihilated, it can be effected only by the infinite prolongation of the state in which all *trishṇā* or *upādānā* is absent, that is to say, only by the continual avoidance of all evil and by the incessant doing of good.

“If the Noble Path be followed,  
Rest and freedom will be man’s ;  
If selfishness be his guide,  
Sin and trouble will drag him along.”

All acts of human beings become evil by ten transgressions, and by the avoidance of these their conduct becomes good. These ten transgressions are the three sins of the body, the four sins of speech, and the three sins of the mind. The three sins of the body are murder, theft and adultery. The four sins of speech are lying, slander, abuse and idle talk. The three sins of the mind are covetousness, hatred and error. “If a man having such faults,” says the Blessed One, “does not repent but allows his heart to remain at rest, sins will rush upon him like water to the sea. When vice has thus become more powerful, it is still harder than before to abandon it. If a bad man, becoming sensible of his faults, abandons them and acts virtuously, his sins will day by day diminish and be destroyed, till he obtains full enlightenment.” Accordingly the Enlightened One taught ten precepts for the guidance and salvation of his followers.

These ten precepts (*daṣakuṣalāṇi*) should not be confounded with the ten precepts (*daṣaṣikshāpada*) specially intended for the *bhikṣhus*. The latter are not incumbent upon laymen; any violation of them is only a breach of the rules of the Saṅgha but not of morality. The ten *kuṣalās*, on the other hand, are to be

practised by all Buddhists. As the *Sutra of 42 sections* says, the *upāsakās* and the *upāsikās*, who do not through indolence neglect the *panchaṣṭīla* but also practise the ten *kuṣalās*, shall surely obtain the fruit. These ten *kuṣalās* are as follows :—

I. From the meanest worm up to man you shall kill no animal whatsoever, but shall have regard for all life.

“Let him not destroy, or cause to be destroyed, any life at all, or sanction the acts of those who do so. Let him refrain even from hurting any creature, both those that are strong, and those that tremble in the world.”—*Dhammika Sutta*.

“Suffuse the world with friendliness; let all creatures, both strong and weak, see nothing that will bode them harm and they will learn the ways of peace.”—*Chulla Vagga*.

“Putting away the murder of that which lives, he abstains from destroying life. The cudgel and the sword he lays aside; and full of modesty and pity, he is compassionate and kind to all creatures that have life.”—*Tevijja Sutta*.

“If a man lives a hundred years and engages the whole of his time and attention in religious offerings to the gods, sacrificing elephants and horses and other things, all this is not equal to one act of pure love in saving life.”—*Chinese Dhammapada*.

“If you desire to do something pleasing to me, then desist from hunting for ever! The poor beasts of the forest, being... dull of intellect, are worthy of pity for this very reason.”—*Jātakamāla*.

In accordance with the spirit of this precept Buddhists all over the world have abstained from killing animals either for pastime or for sacrifice. In Ancient India before the birth of Buddhism the slaughtering of animals for sacrifice was exceedingly common. In the *Satapāṭha Brāhmaṇa*, it is stated that men, horses, bulls, rams and she-goats were used for sacrifice. In the *Asvalāyana Gr̥hyasūtra* mention is made of several sacrifices in which the slaughter of cattle formed a part. One of them is called *Sulagāva* or “spitted calf,” and from the directions given for eating the remains of the offering it is evident that the animal slaughtered was intended for food. Āpastamba does not object to the eating of the meat of milch cows and oxen. Manu (v. 35) declares that the man who, having in due form performed a (*madhuparka* or other) ceremony, fails to eat flesh<sup>1</sup> meat, will be doomed to be born an animal for twenty generations. A guest was called *goghna*, cow-killer, because a cow used to be killed on the arrival of a distinguished guest. The *Mahābhārata* bears testimony to

the high value of flesh as an article of diet. Bloody offerings are still common in many of the temples of Northern India. Nevertheless we find in the mouth of every Hindu the well-known saying *Ahimsā paramo dharma*. How has this change been brought about? We cannot say that it is wholly due to a natural disposition to benevolence. For we find a learned and thoughtful Hindu like Sāṅkara defending the *Jyotishtoma* sacrifice as a holy act, though it involves the shedding of blood, on the ground that that sacrifice is enjoined by the Vedas as a duty. The true reason of the change of feeling towards bloody sacrifices, is given by the author of the *Nirṇaya Sindhu*. This writer says: "The slaughter of large bulls and large sheep for Brahmans versed in the Vedas, though duly ordained, should not be effected being detested by the public. Further the rule, let a cow fit for offering to Mitra and Varuṇa, or a barren cow, or one that has ceased to bear after first calving be sacrificed, is duly ordained, but such sacrifice, being opposed to public feeling, should not be performed." What could have been instrumental in producing this revulsion of public feeling against the ordinances of the Vedas, were it not the Buddhist denunciation of all bloody sacrifices? "Here (*i.e.*, in my kingdom) no animal," promulgated Emperor Asoka, "shall be slaughtered for sacrifice, nor may holiday-feasts be held, for His Majesty King Priyadarsin sees manifold evil in holiday-feasts." The Buddhist appeal to humanity was so strong that it created a horror against the vain sacrifice of animal life, which even a devout belief in the authority of the Vedas and the Smritis could not overcome.

Not only does the Buddhist abhor the vain destruction of animal life, but he also regards it as his duty to care for the well-being of all animals. The second edict of Asoka says: "Everywhere in the dominions of His Majesty King Priyadarsin, and likewise in the neighbouring realms . . . everywhere, on behalf of His Majesty King Priyadarsin, have two kinds of hospitals been established, hospitals for men, and hospitals for beasts. Healing herbs, medicinal for man and medicinal for beast, wherever they were lacking, have everywhere been imported and planted. In like manner, roots and fruits, wherever they were lacking, have been imported and planted. On the roads, trees have been planted, and wells have been dug for the use of man and beast." In all Buddhist lands is the love for animals widely spread. In Tibet all dumb creatures are treated with humanity, and the taking away of animal life is prohibited

except in the case of yaks and sheep needed for food. It is not an uncommon practice for rich Siamese to buy live fish to have the merit of restoring them to the sea. In the same country many living creatures which in Christian countries fly from the presence of man are found to be tame.

Buddhists abstain from taking life, not because, as some Europeans think, they believe in the transmigration of souls, but solely through compassion and *noblesse oblige*. Considering man not as an image of the deity separated from other living creatures by a special act of creation, but only as a being generally akin to animals, though representing a higher stage of evolution, Buddhism inculcates compassion for animal life. On the other hand, Christianity regards man as the centre of creation, as a being set apart from all other creatures as God's special favourite for whose sake everything else was brought into existence. This laid the foundation for placing animals outside the pale of sympathy. St. Paul asks with scorn: "Doth God take care for oxen?" No section of Christendom teaches kindness to animals as a tenet of religion.

Another result of the observance of the precept against the destruction of life is the strong partiality for a vegetarian diet noticed in all Buddhist countries. In the first edict of Emperor Asoka, we read: "Formerly, in the kitchen of His Majesty King Priyadarsin, each day many thousands of living creatures were slain to make curries. At the present moment, when this pious edict is being written, only these three living creatures, namely, two peacocks and one deer, are killed daily, and the deer not invariably. Even these three creatures shall not be slaughtered in future." Such Buddhists as eat meat will not themselves slaughter the animals whose flesh they eat. But there seems to be no reason to suppose that the Buddha strictly prohibited the use of meat. In the *Amagandha Sutta* a Brâhman, abstaining from meat on the ground of its defiling him, is told that what defiles a man is not the eating of flesh, but a bad mind and wicked deeds. When the schismatical Devadatta requested the Blessed One to prohibit his bhikshus from using salt, milk, curds and meat, he refused to impose such stringent rules, as would lead more to asceticism than to the Middle Path which he taught. He ordained that the three kinds of meat that are pure can be eaten without incurring guilt. Nirgranthas, learning that the Buddha was given food with meat in it at an entertainment given to him by a layman, went about sneering the Master for eating

meat specially prepared for him. The Master hearing of this said: "My disciples have permission to eat whatever food it is customary to eat in any place or country, provided that it is done without indulgence of the appetite, or evil desire." Vitasoka, the brother of King Asoka, who first favoured the Thirthakas (Hindu ascetics), charges Sākyaabhiṣhus with devouring much meat and feeding on butter, curds, and well-seasoned rice. Buddhist India was not purely vegetarian until in the seventh century King Cīlāditya prohibited the slaughter of all living creatures and ordered all his people to abstain from eating flesh and himself set the example.

The question of food cannot be solved by psychological or ethical principles, but only in accordance with physiology and hygienic experience. The best food for man seems to be a mixed diet, as his teeth and his digestive apparatus are composite. He possesses certain carnivorous teeth, and certain glands which hardly exert their function except under the stimulus of meat. His digestive apparatus produces some ferments which can do nothing else than digest starch. "It may be plausibly argued that man was first differentiated by becoming definitely carnivorous, a sociable hunter, as it were a wolf-ape. Hence the advantage of longer legs, the use of weapons, the upright gait and defter hands to use and make weapons, more strategic brains, tribal organization; and hence liberation from the tropical forest and citizenship of the world."\* It may be possible for man to subsist on a purely vegetable diet. Abstention from all animal food may have beneficial results under certain conditions. But all people, ancient and modern, have used a mixed diet. People that profess to abstain from meat, use milk, curds, butter, cheese, and eggs. It cannot be denied that flesh speedily increases strength and ordains great development and that there is no food superior to flesh. It is untrue to say that "flesh-food stimulates a man's undesirable passions at the expense of the desirable ones and thus tends to degrade him." All that hygiene has to teach us in this respect is that the simpler food of the less-civilized peoples is preferable to the refined dishes of the civilized nations. As remarked by I-tsing, "to keep our body in health and our work in progress is the Buddha's sincere instruction to us, and self-mortification and toil are the teaching of heretics."

Devout Buddhists have sometimes pushed to extremes their

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\* Carveth Read: *Metaphysics of Nature*, p. 345.

observance of the precept of not killing (*prāṇātīpāda*). They have observed it more in the letter than in the spirit. In the seventh century an imperial decree was issued in Japan forbidding the people to eat the flesh of cattle, horses, dogs, monkeys, or fowls. The Chinese Buddhists are reported to have once prevailed upon a pious emperor to prohibit the manufacture of silk, because the worms in the cocoons had to be killed before their threads could be utilized. But this exaggeration has not the approval of the Blessed One. The life of animals is indeed sacred, but it cannot be as sacred as human life. Animals are tended and cared for, because they in some way subserve general happiness. The exaggerated regard for animal life shown by the pious Buddhists would prove disastrous to the very animals on whose behalf the appeal is made. Our only obligation to animals is to give them a happy life and a painless death. Even the practice of vivisection, if guarded from all abuse, is justifiable in so far as it subserves general happiness. As I-tsing says, "if one attempts to protect every being, there will be no means of maintaining oneself, and one has to give up life without reason."

Though the Buddha has not told us precisely his views as to war, yet there are many passages in the *Sutras* from which we may surmise his attitude. He has deprecated all killing, whether it be for pastime, or for sacrifice, or in warfare. But he has also taught that he who wages war in a righteous cause after having exhausted all means of preserving peace is not blameworthy. In the description of his fight with Māra, the personification of evil, the Tathāgata compares himself to a king who rules his kingdom with righteousness, but being attacked by envious enemies goes out to wage war against them. He who goads others to wage war in a righteous cause suffers the consequences of his own evil doing. Bimbisāra, Gāmini Abhaya, Cīlāditya and other devout Buddhist kings did not shrink, when necessary, from waging war in a righteous cause, though they lamented the vain shedding of blood. The Buddhist bhikshus of ancient times accompanied the Buddhist warriors to the field of battle, just as the priests of the Zen sect accompanied the Japanese soldiers in recent wars.

When there is just cause for war, war must be waged openly and resolutely but without cherishing feelings of hatred and revenge. Nowhere does the Buddha approve of that ovine indolence which would not resist evil even by right methods. When Prince Abhaya was stirred up by Jnātiputra to tax the Blessed One with having used unkind language to the schismatic

Devadatta, the Blessed One explained that a word which is true and is intended to do good, though it gives pain, is right. So also war in a righteous cause, which is intended to teach a lesson to the evil-doer, is right, though it may involve the shedding of blood.

“ Man needs must fight  
To make true peace his own.  
He needs must combat might with might  
Or might would rule alone.”

Yet Buddhism, not being presided over by a “ Lord of Hosts,” who is mighty in battle, does not teach that “ without war the world would smother itself in the swamp of materialism.” It is wholly opposed to that reckless egoism which prompts the strong in the struggle for existence to trample the weak, nor does it favour that militarism which represses all sympathetic feelings, develops the cruel side of human nature, and commends hatred of enemies and revengefulness as the highest virtues. Jesus Christ taught that he came not to send peace but a sword and the nations that follow him are armed to the teeth ready to fly at each other’s throats. On the other hand, the Buddha inculcated long suffering, forgiveness and loving kindness which show not only goodness of heart but also deep wisdom. He aimed at abolishing war by obliterating the belligerent spirit and merging all the nations into a single federation.

The most noteworthy result of the strict observance of the rule : Thou shalt not kill, is the spirit of tolerance so characteristic of Buddhism. It is the only religion which has never sought to extend itself by the sword or by might. Indeed the Buddhist holds his religion to be the truth, but he lets others hold their beliefs in peace. The twelfth edict of Asoka reveals to us the true motive of this toleration. “ His Majesty King Priyadarsin does reverence to men of all sects, whether ascetics or householders, by donations and various modes of reverence. But His Majesty, cares not so much for gifts or external reverence as that there should be a growth of the essence of the matter in all sects. The growth of the essence of the matter assumes various forms, but the root of it is restraint of speech, to wit, a man must not do reverence to his own sect by disparaging that of another man for trivial reasons. Depreciation should be for adequate reasons only, because the sects of other people deserve reverence for one reason or another. By thus acting a man exalts his own sect, and at the same time does service to the sects of other people.



By acting contrariwise a man hurts his own sect, and does disservice to the sects of other people. For he who does reverence to his own sect, while disparaging all other sects from a feeling of attachment to his own on the supposition that he thus glorifies his own sect, in reality by such conduct inflicts severe injury on his own sect. Concord is, therefore, meritorious, in that one hearkens to the teachings of others and hearkens willingly." This spirit of tolerance proved disastrous to Buddhism, especially where it came in contact with Islam.

Closely connected with the question of taking life in general is the question of taking away one's own life. The moral valuation of suicide must naturally vary with circumstances. The point of view from which life is regarded and the notions held about the future life are determining factors in making suicide an object of moral approbation or disapprobation. The Hindus have always considered with approval certain forms of self-destruction practised for religious purposes. Among the Japanese suicide calls forth approval or admiration as indicating great courage or a keen sense of honour. Hume recommends suicide on certain occasions. "Suppose," says he, "that it is no longer in my power to promote the interest of society ; suppose that I am a burden to it ; suppose that my life hinders some person from being much more useful to society. In such cases my resignation must not only be innocent but laudable." The attitude of Buddhism towards suicide is clearly described by I-tsing as follows : " For the Buddhist bhikshu there is but one course to pursue. Those who are just beginners in their studies, being ignorant of the sacred books, are intent on becoming brave and glorious. They follow in the footsteps of those who considered the burning of fingers a devout deed, and the destruction of their body by fire a blessed action. They follow their own inclinations thinking in their hearts such actions to be right. True, there are some references to such deeds in the *Sūtras*, but they are meant for laymen, for it is right for them to offer, not only any treasures in their possession, but even their own lives when needed. Therefore it is often said in the Sutra : ' If a person incline his heart to the Dharma,' etc., and thus it does not refer to the bhikshus. Why ? The homeless bhikshus should strictly confine themselves to the rules of the Vinaya. If they are not guilty of transgressing them, they are acting in conformity with the Sutra. If there be any transgression of the precepts, their obedience is at fault. As a bhikshu one should not even destroy a single stalk of grass, though the *Vihāra* may

be overgrown with grass ; one should not steal even a grain of rice, though one may be starving in a lonely field. But it is right for a layman, such as he who (in the *Saddharmapundarika*) is called Sarvasattvapriyadarsana, to offer food by roasting his own arm. The Bodhisattva (Visvāntara) gave away his male and female offspring, but a bhikshu need not look for a male or female to give away. The Mahāsattva (Cibi) offered his own eyes and body, but a bhikshu need not do so. King Maitribala sacrificed himself (to feed the ghouls), but the bhikshu need not follow his example. It is said that youths, bravely devoting themselves to the practice of the Dharma, consider the burning of the body a means of attaining Buddhahood and abandon their lives. This is not right. Why ? It is difficult to be born as a human being. Though born in human form, one may not have wisdom enough to embrace the admirable teaching. After having studied but a few verses of the Sutra and just begun meditating on *anitya*, it is but vain to give up one's insignificant body. How can we think much of such a worthless offer ? We have strictly to observe the precepts, requiting the benefits received from teachers, parents, benefactors, sovereigns, and engage ourselves in meditation to save all classes of beings. We must feel how great a danger lies even in a small fault. We must be strictly on our guard while striving to gain wisdom. Thus conducting ourselves and helped by good friends our mind will be stable till the last moment of our life. I have never found any reason why we should rashly give up our life. The guilt of suicide is next to the breach of the *pārājika* prohibitions. If we carefully examine the Vinaya texts, we never come across any passage which sanctions suicide. We learn from the Buddha's own words the right method of controlling our senses. What use is it to burn our body in destroying our passions ? The Buddha did not allow even castration, much less would he have permitted the destruction of the body. The Buddha's word forbids us to transgress a weighty precept, and follow our own will. The proverb says : " It is better to requite the favours of others than to destroy one's own life, and it is better to build up character than to defame one's name." In the river Ganges many men drown themselves every day. On the hill of Gaya too there are not infrequently cases of suicide. Some starve themselves and eat nothing. Others climb up trees and throw themselves down. The World-Honoured judged these misled men to be heretics. Some intentionally destroy their members and become eunuchs. These actions are entirely out

of harmony with the Vinaya canon. Even those who consider such practices to be wrong are afraid, lest they should sin by preventing such actions. But if one destroy life in such a way, the great object of one's existence is lost. That is why the Buddha prohibited it. We are disregarding his noble teaching, if we take refuge in such a practice as burning our bodies. The superior bhikshus and wise teachers never acted in any such harmful way. But we are not discussing the conduct of those who wish to follow the practice of a bodhisattva in sacrificing themselves for the good of others. When a bodhisattva wishes in pity to save those who are suffering, he is willing to throw himself into the blazing flame of a big fire. It was the bodhisattva's work of salvation to offer his body to a hungry tiger. But it is not seemly for a Sramaṇa, who has received the Vinaya rules to cut the flesh from his body in order to give it away in exchange for the life of a pigeon. It is not in our power to imitate a bodhisattva. I have roughly stated what is right or wrong according to the Tripiṭaka."

In the eye of the Buddhist the greatest treasure which living creatures possess is life. The Tripiṭaka no doubt says that the body is born to suffering, but nowhere is it said that we should hate and cast away the body. Even when a man may be suffering from a painful and incurable disease, or may have spoilt his own life and that of others and be a standing disgrace to himself and his family, or have no hope of honest employment and none of social or civic usefulness, it is better to bear affliction quietly and patiently and get rid of it in every good way possible than to destroy the body. If one loathe one's body, there can be no cessation to one's suffering. Still there can be nothing wrong in sacrificing life for noble ends.

II. You shall neither rob nor steal, but help every one to be the master of the fruits of his labour.

"A disciple knowing the Dharma should refrain from stealing anything at any place, should not cause another to steal anything, should not consent to the acts of those who steal anything, should avoid every kind of theft."—*Dhammika Sutta*.

"He is the greatest gainer who gives to others, and he loses most who receives from others without giving a compensation."—*Dhammapāda*.

"Putting away the theft of that which is not his, he abstains from anything not given. He takes only what is given, therewith

is he content, and he passes his life in honesty and purity of heart.”—*Tevijja Sutta*.

In abstaining from theft the chief motives ought to be contempt for wealth and the conviction that the mere accumulation of property is a hindrance to the higher life. The Buddhist has certainly to acquire wealth, but not accumulate property for himself. Said the Blessed One to Anāthapindika : “It is not life and wealth and power that enslave men, but the cleaving to them. He who possesses wealth and uses it rightly, will be a blessing unto his fellow beings.” The Buddhist’s aspiration must be : “May I obtain wealth, . . . and may the wealth . . . obtained by me be for the benefit of others” (*Jināḷankāra*). He whose thought and labour are expended altogether upon his family is only one step above the man who labours and plans solely for himself. Such a man, though often an angel to his family, may prove a demon to all the rest of the world. Do not diamonds for the wife often cost the bread of the poor ? Is it a virtue to accumulate money enough to educate one’s family decorously with a surplus on which to be generous, while by so doing one pushes one’s neighbour’s family to the wall ? Whatever the Buddhist acquires is for the benefit of all mankind. This is one of the several reasons for the Buddhist bhikshu’s vow of poverty. The individual bhikshu is poor, but the *Saṅgha*, the community of aspirants for bodhi all over the world, may be rich. According to the Vinaya it is allowable for a bhikshu to try to gain profits on behalf of the Saṅgha. But even for a Saṅgha it is not right to have great wealth, granaries full of corn, many male and female servants, money and treasure hoarded in the treasury, without using any of these things while people around are suffering from poverty.

The spirit of Buddhism is essentially socialistic, that is to say, it teaches concerted action (*samānārthā*) for social ends, a completely fraternal social life. It is therefore totally opposed to that industrialism which with its unremitting, sordid, unscrupulous and merciless struggle for wealth as the one supreme object of human effort is eating the very vitals of the so-called advanced nations of the world. This fascination for the pursuit of wealth has produced within trade circles perfect callousness to the feeling of human brotherhood. Observe the attitude of labourer to capitalist, tenant to landowner, of middleman to producer, or of consumer to middleman. Do not these exhibit suspicions and enmical feelings towards one another ? “If

success attends upon a man in his commercial warfare, if his intrigues are only wide enough to give him plunder on a vast scale, he passes for a merchant-prince, the rightfulness of whose transactions is little questioned, and men poorer but of noble sentiment, extend to him the hand of fellowship and call him a gentleman." A commercial civilization fosters and applauds only self-regarding virtues. It attaches nominal respect to integrity and does not set much store by justice. Defence of personal rights is regarded as the first canon of duty. Indifference to personal gain is treated with contempt. Can the accumulation of capital in the hands of a few find ethical justification? Capital is not, as some economists contend, always the result of individual saving or exceptional skill in labour but is the surplus seized from producers, many of whom are reduced to a condition of slavery for the comfort and the enjoyment of a few. Men in the lower ranks are pillaged to support the higher in luxury and idleness. Some have become millionaires without labour and skill, without superior ability, sagacity or enterprise. How does this differ from theft?

There are still other kinds of theft. "It can never be pretended that the existing titles to such property (landed property) are legitimate. . . . Violence, fraud, the prerogative of force, the claims of superior cunning—these are the sources to which these titles may be traced." So said Herbert Spencer in the first edition of his *Social Statics*. Matters have not changed much since then, and his remark is as true now as then. Even the so-called imperialism of modern times is but a manifestation of a robbing propensity, for it means nothing else than the lust of conquest and the greed of commercial gain. From first to last the one motive which has governed the Christian nations of Europe in their dealings with the so-called pagan nations of Eastern Asia has been the thirst for plunder. On the plea of spreading civilization, stronger nations exploit weaker peoples and ignoring treaties and understandings trick the latter out of their lands. The Hindu epic says that the best property is that which one gets by taking it away from another. But Buddhism prohibits theft of every form whatever may be the euphemistic name by which it may be known. Even in extreme need, when no other means of relief may be available, there can be no justification for seizing others' goods. Individual selflessness and sacrifice are absolutely necessary for social health.

III. You shall not violate the wife of another nor even his concubine, but lead a life of chastity.

"A wise man should avoid unchastity as if it were a burning pit of live coals. One who is not able to live in a state of celibacy should not commit adultery."—*Dhammika Sutta*.

"If you speak to a woman, do it with pureness of heart. . . . Say to yourself: 'Placed in this sinful world, let me be as the spotless lily, unsoiled by the mire in which it grows.' Is she old, regard her as your mother; is she honourable, as your sister; is she of small account, as a younger sister; is she a child, treat her with reverence and politeness."—*Sutra of forty-two sections*.

"There is nothing like lust. Lust may be said to be the most powerful passion. Fortunately, we have but one thing which is more powerful. If the thirst for truth were weaker than lust, how many of us in the world would be able to follow the way of righteousness."—*Ibid*.

"Guard yourself against a worldly woman who is anxious to exhibit her form and shape, whether walking, standing, sitting, or sleeping, and is desirous of captivating with the charms of her beauty. Restrain the heart and give it no unbridled license. Lust beclouds a man's heart when it is confused with woman's beauty and the mind is dazed."—*Fo-sho-hin-shan-king*.

"At the sight of beauty the heart is at once ensnared, because it considers not the impermanency of all such appearances. The fool regarding the outward form as an excellency, how can he know the falseness of the thing, for, like a silkworm envelopes in its own cocoon, is he entangled in his own love of sensual pleasure. But the wiseman, able to separate himself and cast off all this, is no longer entangled, but casts off all sorrows."—*Dhammapāda*.

In the Vedic times chastity does not seem to have been valued very highly. In the *Varunapraghāsa* the wife of the sacrificer is required by the priest to name her paramour. "Who cares," it is said, "whether the wife is unchaste or no." Men were conscious of the actual unreliability of their ancestors. In the *Nidāna Sutra* it is said: "Inconstant are the ways of women. Of whomsoever (as father) I shall call myself the son before both gods and men as witnesses, his son I shall be; and those whom I name as (my) sons, they will be my sons." The attempt was of course made in ancient times to provide against this unreliability by strict oversight of the woman, as the begetting of a son of the body (*bijāvan*) was regarded even in the Rig Veda as necessary for the preservation of the race. This is proved by the following

*gātha* occurring in a dialogue between Aupajandhani, a teacher of the White Yajur Veda and the mythical king Janaka : “ Now am I jealous for my wife, though (I was) not before ; for in Yama’s house the son is awarded to him who begot him. The begetter leads the son after his death into the dwelling place of Yama. Therefore they protect their wives carefully who dread the seed of strangers. Watch jealously this propagation of your race, let no strange seed fall on your field. When he passes into the other world, the son belongs to him who begot him ; it is in vain that the husband (the nominal father) accomplishes the perpetuation of his race.” Even when in later times a strict marriage law was developed and in the Smritis legal regulations were formulated with regard to adultery (*Strīsangrahaṇa*), polygamy and prostitution continued to exist, and the frequent mention of *gūḍaja* or *gūḍhotpanna*, who may be heir to his mother’s husband, though he is her illegitimate son by some other man, does not afford proof of a high regard for the marital bond. Under the increasing influence of priestly theories adultery was seen to involve a danger to the caste system established by the Brahmans, and an attempt was made to obviate this by the threat of severe punishments. It is essentially from the standpoint of caste distinctions that adultery is condemned in the Smritis and the Mahābhārata. The punishments are graded according to the caste to which the offenders belong. Among reasons which deter a woman from adultery, regard for morals is mentioned only in the last place in secular literature. Among the Vaishnavites adultery is considered venial, which is but natural considering the debaucheries of their god Krishna. The followers of Chaitanya in Bengal disregard the law of chastity and some of their sub-sects go even further and treat promiscuous intercourse as virtuous. As infant marriage is not a product of social evolution and exists only among the Brahmans and their followers, one is inclined to regard it as well as the *pardah* system as a result of the distrust of woman’s virtue induced by the remembrance of a stage of license. Strabo may be right in saying that *sati* was instituted to prevent wives from poisoning their husbands.

The canonical literature of Buddhism is chaste throughout. The Buddhist ideal of chastity is brought out clearly in the *Unmādayanti Jataka*, in which the firmness of a king of Sibi is shaken by the power of passionate love. The husband of the enchanting woman, who happens to be one of the king’s officers, voluntarily offers his wife to the king. The king refuses the offer

and admonishes the officer thus : " I should dare throw myself on a sharp sword or into a fire with blazing flames but I shall not be able to offend against righteousness, which I have always observed and to which I owe my royal bliss. Never delight in injuring righteousness for the sake of life. The sin you would incur, would be great and unquestionable, the advantage trifling and doubtful. The virtuous do not like for themselves a pleasure procured at the expense of others, whom they have distressed by bringing them into disrepute and the like. For this reason, standing on the ground of righteousness, I shall bear the charge of my private interests alone without causing pain to others. If I should lack the power of ruling my own self, say, into what condition would I bring this people who long for protection from my side ? Thus considering and regardful of the good of my subjects, my own righteousness, and my spotless fame, I do not allow myself to submit to my passion." The moralist of the present day can say nothing better against adultery than that it involves a breach of faith and is therefore an offence against him or her to whom faith is due.

Religions have generally denounced the sexual impulse and even recommended its absolute repression. This attitude may be irrational but not unjustifiable. There may be nothing undignified or immoral in the proper exercise of the sexual function. It may be even true that all such noble traits as sympathy, fidelity, affection, self-sacrifice, which are included under the term altruism spring from the reproductive instinct. But the sex-functions are no longer limited, as among animals, to breeding seasons nor to the desire of the female, nor exercised for procreation only, but has become an end in itself. Not infrequently the dress of woman is such as to bring into exaggerated prominence the organs specially connected with the sexual function. Further, the excesses connected with the satisfaction of the sexual appetite have been so frightful as to justify the feeling of sinfulness attached to it. Prostitution, abortion, preventives, precocity, sex-diseases, divorces, defective parenthood, inability to nurse are some of the results of the abnormal use of the sex-function. Like fire, sex is a good servant but a bad master. Few are they who have escaped unscathed by its conflagration. The over-mastering power of the reproductive instinct has often proved too great even for religion in some forms not to succumb to it. A great number of religious rites and usages are nothing else than symbolic representations of sexual practices. The sexual orgies of the religious festivals of



times and many extravagant religious rites of more recent times owe their origin to the overpowering character of the productive impulse. It is, therefore, only natural that special actions should be laid down against the improper exercise of sexual function.

Though the Dharma prohibits all illegitimate sexual relations, it does not follow that sexual intercourse is completely interdicted for those who aspire for the higher life. Were all sexual intercourse of this very nature an obstacle to the higher life, it ought not to have been possible for Siddārtha to attain bodhi. Siddārtha was not only married, but lived in luxury. Why the Dharma condemns sexual indulgence is that it creates a craving for enjoyment, and is the chief cause of various nervous disorders. Though the ostensible object of marriage is the preservation of the species, in reality marriages are contracted not in the interests of the future generation, but solely with regard to the personal rests and enjoyments of the contracting parties. The choice of a wife or of a husband is determined so much by worldly conventions and material interests that neither health nor beauty, intellect nor heart is considered to be of any value. The Dharma can have no objection to marriages with the high motive of propagating the species. Some Buddhist schools have maintained that it is possible for a laic to become not only an *anāgāmin*, but also an *arhat*. Nagasena admits in answer to King Milinda that laymen, living at home, enjoying the pleasures of sense, have realised in themselves the state of peace, the supreme good, which is known as Nirvāṇa. The venerable Upagupta is said to have known many married men and women to the attainment of the state of arhatship. Some Buddhist books, like the *Mañichuda dāna*, even make marriage compulsory for the *bodhisattva*, aspirant for *bodhi*, an idea which may have given birth to the married clergy of Japan.

When Yuan Chuang sought permission to be admitted into the Buddhist Saṅgha, the Chinese High Commissioner asked him what his motive was in becoming a bhikṣu. The youthful Buddhist replied: "My only thought in taking this step is to take abroad the light of the transmitted Dharma of Tathāgata, which we possess." Just the same motive it was that influenced the Blessed One to renounce the world. If the Blessed One left his wife and children and went into homelessness, it was because desire prevailed and the world was plunged in darkness. Having attained the deathless Nirvāṇa he was bent wholly on the one aim

of pointing out the path to others, and those of his followers, who like him have left the world, live a life of poverty and celibacy, not for their own sake, for they have given up all attachment to self, but for the sake of the salvation of the world. *Bhikṣhutā* consists not in wearing the yellow robe but in *bhinna kleṣatā*, the freedom from sorrow ; it is not the mere observance of rules that makes the *arhat*, but the deliverance, the purification of thought and life.

IV. You shall speak no word that is false, but shall speak the truth with discretion, not so as to harm, but with a loving heart and wisely.

“When one comes to an assembly or gathering he should not tell lies to any one, or cause any to tell lies, or consent to the acts of those who tell lies ; he should avoid every kind of untruth.”—*Dhammika Sutta*.

“Speak the truth ; do not yield to anger ; give if you are asked : by these three steps you will become divine.”—*Dhammapāda*.

Putting away lying, he abstains from speaking falsehood. He speaks truth, from the truth he never swerves ; faithful and trustworthy, he injures not his fellow-man by deceit.—*Tevijja Sutta*.

The Dharma regards lying as one of the gravest of offences that man may commit. There is scarcely a crime or vice into which lying does not enter as an important element. Not only does lying involve an abuse of confidence, but in its essence it is cowardice, “the desire to gain an advantage or inflict an injury which we dare not effect by open means, or to escape a punishment or avoid a loss which we have not the courage to face squarely or submit to.” Calumny, flattery, perjury are different forms or grades of lying.

Hypocrisy, which is want of consistency in thought, speech and action, is a form of lying which is fostered largely by churches. Writing on the ethics of conformity, a well-known writer on ethical subjects says : “The student of history sees that hypocrisy and insincere conformity have always been the besetting vice of the religious, and a grave drawback to their moralising influence. Just as lying is the recognised vice of diplomats, chicanery of lawyers, and solemn quackery of physicians.”

“Tell a lie and shame the devil” is a proverb that originated from a church whose early representatives, according to Lecky, “laid down a distinct proposition that pious frauds were justifiable and even laudable.”

A question of some importance in relation to lying is the lie of necessity. Is lying under all circumstances wrong, or are there conditions under which it is permissible or necessary? "In the case of sexual gratification, of marriage, of food eaten by cows, of fuel for a sacrifice, of benefit or protection accruing to a Brāhman, there is no sin in an oath": says the Code of Manu. In the *Mahābhārata* Krishna says that "these five kinds of falsehood have been declared to be sinless." In another place in the same book Krishna is openly charged with violating all rules of honour and noble conduct; to which the god at first replies by specious reasoning (tit for tat), and then, throwing off all disguise, says: "This man could not be killed by righteous means, nor could your enemies have been slain, if I had not acted thus sinfully." Although Buddhism attaches great importance to the motive\* that determines an action, although it regards a deed as innocent if no sin lurks in the heart, yet in the matter of lying Buddhism is uncompromising. Its only behest is: Speak the truth with discretion, but always be truthful; never alter or disguise the truth whatever may be the case; love the truth even to martyrdom. The truth must be disclosed for the benefit of others even when it may be attended with injurious consequences for the person who discloses it. Are not truth and goodness inseparably united? Does not perfect truth always bring consolation with it? How can he who desires wisdom and enlightenment be so selfish and cowardly as to utter an untruth?

V. † You shall not take anything that may intoxicate.

"The house-holder who delights in the Dharma should not indulge in intoxicating drinks, should not sanction the actions of those who drink, knowing that it results in insanity.

"The ignorant commit sins in consequence of drunkenness, and also make others drink. You should avoid it as it is the cause

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\* In the sixth lecture of *Sutrakritāṅga* the Buddhists are severely ridiculed by the Jains for maintaining that it depends upon the intention of a man whether a deed of his is a sin or not.

† The ten sins which should not be committed are generally enumerated as follows: (1) Killing a living being (*prañātipāda*); (2) Stealing (*adattadana*); (3) Committing adultery (*kāmamithyāchāra*); (4) Lying (*mṛshāvāda*); (5) Slander (*pañcūya*); (6) Abusive language (*pārushya*); (7) Frivolous talk (*sambhinnāpralāpā*); (8) Avarice (*abhidhya*); (9) Evil intent (*vyāpāda*); (10) False view (*mithyādr̥ṣhti*). But in the treatment adopted in this book drunkenness (*surāpāna*) has been made the fifth evil, as its avoidance finds a place in the *pañcha śīla*, which are obligatory on all Buddhists. The evils represented by (6) and (7) in the above list have been incorporated and dealt with together.

of demerit, insanity and ignorance—though it be pleasing to the ignorant.”—*Dhammika Sutta*.

“Drunkenness is the cause of the loss of goods and reputation, of quarrels, diseases, immodesty of dress, disregard of honour and incapacity of learning.”—*Sigālovāda Sutta*.

The use of intoxicating drinks was exceedingly common in Ancient India. The Vedic Brāhmins indulged largely both in *soma* beer and strong spirits. The most acceptable and grateful offering to their gods was *soma* beer. In the *Rig Veda* we read : “The sacred prayer, desiring your presence, offers to you both, Indra and Agni, for your exhilaration, the *soma* libation. Beholders of all things, seated at this sacrifice upon the sacred grass, be exhilarated by drinking of the effused libation.” The object of drinking *soma* is expressly stated to be intoxication. *Sura*, a distilled liquor, was likewise offered to the gods. In the *Sautrāmanī* and *Vajapeya* rites libations of strong arrack formed a prominent feature.

At no time in their history have the Hindus as a people abstained altogether from the use of intoxicating liquors as a means of gratification. In the Dharma Sutras beside the *soma* and the *sura* of the *Samhitas* we find mention of *madvika* or mowa, *tāla* or toddy spirit, and other liquors. In the Rāmāyana Visvāmitra is said to have been entertained by Vasishta with *maireya* (rum) and *sura*. Sita, when crossing the Ganges on her way to the wilderness, promises to worship the river-goddess with a thousand jars of arrack on her return home. Similarly on crossing the Yamuna Sita promises to worship the river with a hundred jars of arrack after the accomplishment of her husband’s vow. In the last book of the Rāmāyana, Rāma makes Sita drink pure *maireya*, and both are entertained by hosts of apsaras, who have been exhilarated with wine. In the Mahābhārata, Krishna and Arjuna are described as having their eyes reddened by drinking *madhvi* and *āsava*. Manus says that “there is no turpitude in drinking,” though “a virtuous abstinence from it produces a signal compensation.” According to the *Mitākshara* the Brāhmins alone have to abstain from all kinds of spirituous liquors, the Kshatriya and Vaisya from arrack or *paishṭi*, and Sudras may indulge in whatever they liked. In one of the tāntric books Siva addresses his consort thus : “O sweet speaking goddess, the salvation of Brāhmins depends on drinking liquor. I impart to you a truth, a great truth, O mountain-born, that the Brāhman

who attends to drinking and its accompaniments forthwith becomes a Siva.”\*

The Buddhists were the first to enjoin total abstinence from strong drink in India. The reason why the Dharma prohibits strong drink is that intoxication incapacitates a man for rational deliberation without hindering him from acting irrationally. Drunkenness leads the drunkard to treat others irrationally and possibly to abuse them. That drunkenness is the cause of many crimes is a well-known fact. Hence to put oneself in such a condition is a source of insecurity to others.

Alcohol is more a heat-producer than a tissue-former. It is certain that a portion of the alcohol absorbed undergoes combustion; but a great part of it is disengaged in the form of vapour, as is proved by the breath of drunkards, and the combustion takes place without any special benefit for the regeneration of the tissues. Even the experiments of Dr. Atwater have not proved alcohol to be a veritable food, that is to say, something which is capable of being incorporated into the organism. Alcohol employed in small doses acts as a stimulant to the nervous system; in very feeble doses and in certain cases it may be useful as a medicine. But its abuse is more productive of mischief than good.

According to Buddhism the love of intoxicating liquors and drugs is one of the six ruinous things. The other five are wandering about the streets at unreasonable hours; too great a passion for dancing, games and spectacles; gambling†; frequenting vicious company; slothfulness and negligence in the performance of one's duty. “Unseasonable wanderings expose a man to great dangers, and by keeping him from his family oblige him to leave the chastity of his wife and daughters unprotected; and moreover, his possessions are thus liable to depredations. He may likewise be taken in the company of thieves and punished with them. A passion for shows draws a man from his occupations, and hinders him from gaining his livelihood. In gambling success is followed by intrigues and quarrels; loss by bitterness and sorrow of heart as well as dilapidation of fortune. The gambler's word has no weight in a court of law, he is despised by his friends and his kinsmen, and he is looked upon as ineligible for marriage. Fre-

\* See Rajendralal Mitra's *Essays on Indo-Aryans*, Vol. II.

† No vice was so universal as deceit and gambling. Perjury also was not uncommon, and there was no lack of robbers and thieves.—*Zimmer's Altindisch Leben*.

quenting the company of the vicious will lead a man into the houses of women of ill-fame, into drunkenness and gluttony, into deceit and robbery, and all kinds of disorders. Finally the sluggard who neglects his duties fails to acquire new property and that which he possesses dwindles away."

The Chinese *Brahmajāla Sutra* forbids the sale of spirituous liquors by a Buddhist or even facilitating their sale, as such a thing may induce another to a sinful act.

"Wine is a thing of boastful pride,  
An ugly, naked, cowardly imp,  
To strife and calumny allied  
A home to shelter thief and pimp."—*Kumbha Jātaka*.

VI. You shall not swear nor use abusive language nor indulge in idle and vain talk, but speak decently and with dignity to the purpose, or keep silence.

"The fool who is angered and thinks to triumph by the use of abusive language, is always, vanquished by him whose words are patient."—*Udānavarga*.

"Putting away foolish talk, he abstains from vain conversation. In season he speaks; he speaks that which is; he speaks fact; he utters good doctrine; he utters good discipline; he speaks at the right time that which redounds to profit, is well-grounded, is well-defined, and is full of wisdom."—*Tevijja Sutta*.

"From evil and abusive words and an overbearing and insulting disposition towards others, hatred and resentment increase and grow. Restraining one's words, and behaving decorously to men, using patience and courtesy, these evil consequences are self-destroyed. The future of a man depends on his words, and therefore from evil words comes self-destruction."—*Chinese Dharmapāda*.

"Speech must be bold as a lion, gentle and soft as a hare, impressive as a serpent, pointed as an arrow and evenly balanced as a dorje (dumb-bell) held by its middle."—*A Buddhist proverb from Tibet*.

The man seeking the higher life must renounce worldly ambition and all luxurious tastes, and unprofitable amusements; he must refrain from idle as well as mischievous words; he must not gossip about great people; he must not speak at all about meats, drinks, clothes, perfumes, couches, equipages, women, warriors, demigods, fortune-telling, hidden treasures, short stories, nor about empty

tales concerning things that are and things that are not. As the *Sutra of forty-two sections* says, "to feed a single good man is infinitely greater in point of merit than attending to questions about heaven and earth, spirits and demons, such as occupy ordinary men."

VII. You shall not invent evil reports, nor repeat them. You shall not carp, but look for the good side of your fellow-beings, so that you may with sincerity defend them against their enemies.

"Putting away slander, he abstains from calumny. What he hears here he repeats not elsewhere to raise a quarrel against the people here; what he hears elsewhere he repeats not here to raise a quarrel against the people there. Thus he lives as a binder together of those who are divided, an encourager of those who are friends, a peace-maker, a lover of peace, impassioned for peace, a speaker of words that make for peace."—*Tevijja Sutta*.

"Not the failure of others, nor their sins of commission or omission, but his own misdeeds and negligences should the wise man take notice of."—*Dhammapāda*.

"Evil-doers who denounce the wise resemble a person who spits against the sky; the spittle will never reach the sky, but comes down on himself. Evil-doers again resemble a man who stirs the dust against the wind; the dust is never raised without doing him injury. Thus, the wise will never be hurt, but the curse is sure to destroy the evil-doers themselves."

—*Sutra of forty-four sections*.

The invention of evil reports and repeating them are only different forms of lying. "One must regard oneself as wicked and others as good; one must therefore give up the evil in him and try to copy the good in others." So says the *Bodhicharyavatāra*.

VIII. You shall not covet your neighbour's goods, but rejoice at the fortunes of other people.

"Liberality, courtesy, benevolence, kindness—these are to the world what the linchpin is to the rolling chariot."—*Sigālovāda Sutta*.

"The fool self-bound by his covetousness seeks not to escape to that shore. Coveting wealth and lustful indulgence, he destroys and he is self-destroyed. The covetous mind is the field, uxoriousness, anger, delusion are the fruits. The wise man, therefore, puts away all covetous desire."—*Dhammapāda*.

It is selfish to seek one's own advantage, regardless of others, or at the expense of others. Jealousy is an intense form of selfishness which takes pleasure in the distress and sufferings of others without advantage to self. Ceaseless competition has bred a propensity, in proportion as one covets success, to hate those who succeed better and to rejoice in their calamity, if eventually they fall. The poet has rightly described jealousy as "the fire of endless night, the fire that burns and gives no light."

IX. You shall cast out all malice, anger, spite and ill-will, and shall not cherish hatred even against those who do you harm, but embrace all living beings with loving kindness and benevolence.

"Let a man overcome anger by love; let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, and the liar by truth. For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love, this is its true nature."—*Dhammapāda*.

"To the man who foolishly does me wrong I shall return the protection of my ungrudging love; the more the evil that comes from him, the more the good that shall go from me."—*Sutra of forty-two sections*.

"Returning good for good is very noble, but returning good for evil is nobler still."—*Bodhicharyāvatāra*.

"Good men melt with compassion even for one who has wrought them harm."—*Avadāna Kalpalata*.

"A loving heart is the greatest requirement! Not to oppress, not to destroy, . . . not to exalt oneself by treading down others, but to comfort and befriend those in suffering."—*Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king*.

"With pure thoughts and fulness of love, I will do to others what I do for myself."—*Latita-Vistara*.

"The virtuous (when injured) grieve not so much for their own pain as for the loss of happiness incurred by their injurers."  
—*Jātakamāla*.

"All injury, insult and calumny which falleth on others shalt thou divert upon thyself. Thou shalt hide thine own virtue and excellence, lest they eclipse those of others."—*Chinese Brahmajāla Sutra*.

Justice, concerned with man as he is at present, demands that we should respect and protect the rights of others as well as our own by lawful means. So it says: Do unto others what you wish they should do unto you, that is to say, render to each one that which is his due. But morality with its eye directed to the future



man tells us that the duty of justice should be supplemented by equity and magnanimity. Equity demands that we should resign claims and acts to which we have an unquestionable theoretical right, so that the advancement of our interests may not cause relatively greater damage to those of others. Magnanimity requires us to overlook personal injuries and not to embrace the opportunity of revenge, though it present itself.

The teaching, "love thy neighbour as thyself," is not only vague, but may also lead to mischievous consequences. If a man love himself meanly, childishly, timidly, even so shall he love his neighbour. If a man hate himself, it must follow that he must hate others too. The teaching of Buddhism is definite, and requires us to love ourselves with a love that is healthy and wise, that is large and complete. To be effectually generous one must have a confident, tranquil and clear comprehension of all that one owes to one's self. If you are asked to love your enemy and return good for evil, it is because, as the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* says, "an enemy is one who is capable of helping you to acquire bodhi, if you can only love him." One should hate hatred and not the person who hates him. This does not mean that one should show the left cheek, when smitten on the right, but it means that we must fight evil with good. Passive non-resistance of evil is no morality at all. The meekness of the lamb is praiseworthy, but if it could lead only to becoming a prey to the rapacity of the tiger, it is not worth possessing. Like hypocrisy and conceit, envy and avarice, deceit and treachery, obstinacy and perverseness, pride and vain glory, discontent and negligence, bodily sloth and intellectual inertness, anger and enmity weaken the mind and make it unable to destroy the *āsravas*. Owing to anger and hatred the world is under the sway of quarrels, strife, disputes and animosities. The strenuous Buddhist has therefore to keep his mind ever anointed with the antidote of love.

"Therefore should love be felt for one's own kin,  
And so for strangers too, and the whole wide world  
Should be pervaded with a heart of love—  
This is the doctrine of the Buddhas all."

The Blessed One again and again impressed upon his followers the duty of practising *maitri* or universal love. *Maitri* must not be confounded with *kāma* and *prēma* (*priya*, *prīti*). The former stands for sexual love, which is regarded as a hindrance (*sam-vojana*) to spiritual progress. The latter represents the natural

affection and friendliness, such as exists between parents and children, or brothers and sisters. But, as this is not completely free from the taint of selfishness, it is not considered the highest ideal. *Maitrī* represents the perfection of loving kindness, as it "does not cling to love for selfish sweets of love." In the *Metta Sutta* of *Sutta Nipāta* it is said : "As a mother, even at the risk of her own life, protects her son, her only son, so let every man cultivate *maitrī* without measure among all beings. Let him cultivate *maitrī* without measure toward the whole world, above, below, around, unstinted and unmixed with any feeling of difference or opposition. Let a man remain steadfastly in this state of mind all the while he is awake, whether he be standing, walking, sitting, or lying down. This state of heart (*chetovimukti*) is the best in the world."

"Do not deceive, do not despise  
Each other, anywhere ;  
Do not be angry, nor should ye  
Secret resentment bear.  
For as a mother risks her life  
And watches o'er her child,  
So boundless be your love to all  
So tender, kind and mild.  
"Yea, cherish goodwill right and left  
All round, early and late,  
And without hindrance, without stint,  
From envy free and hate,  
While standing, walking, sitting down,  
Whate'er you have in mind,  
The rule of life that's always best  
Is to be loving kind."\*

While the Brahmanical books always speak of the love of a woman for her paramour as the highest form of love, the Buddhist books always regard the love of a mother for her child as the highest. It is a fact of evolution that maternal love is the source and origin of all human virtues. From the need of food, the need of safety, and the individual interests connected with reproduction arise the selfish lower emotions, such as hate, fear, jealousy, anger. On the other hand, maternal love, which is an unselfish form of love, develops into charity and altruism and later grows by admixture with other elements, such as desire and imagination, into faith and hope. The basis of maternal love is the law of sacrifice.

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\* Dr. Paul Carus : Gems of Buddhist Poetry.

From *maitri* originate *karuṇa* (compassion) and *mudita* (goodwill), and therefore it is higher than both of these. All pious deeds, all gifts, are nothing compared to a loving heart. In another place the Holy One says : “ Who, O bhikṣus, in the morning, midday and evening, cherish love in their hearts only for one moment acquire thereby greater merit than those who, morning, midday and evening, make presents of hundreds of bowls of food.” With a few exceptions the disciples of the Buddha have always followed his exhortation to practise love.

How the bhikṣus practised love towards one another is illustrated by the following anecdote : “ Once the Blessed One happened to visit the *Prāchīnavamsadāva*, the eastern bamboo forest. Then there lived the venerable Anuruddha, the venerable Nandika and the venerable Kimbila. The keeper of the forest, seeing the Buddha coming towards him, cried out : “ O bhikṣu, do not enter this forest. Here live three great men free from all troubles and sorrows, do not disturb them ! ” The venerable Anuruddha, hearing how the forester addressed the Blessed One, said : “ Brother forester, do not obstruct the Blessed One. Our Blessed Master is there.” And the venerable Anuruddha went to the venerable Nandika and the venerable Kimbila, and said to them : “ Come, Venerable One, Come, Venerable One, our Blessed Teacher is there.” And the venerable Anuruddha, the venerable Nandika, and the venerable Kimbila, went to the Blessed One. One removed his robe and alms-bowl, one arranged for him a suitable seat, the other brought him a foot-stool, a basin and water to wash his feet. The Blessed One seated himself on the seat prepared for him and washed his feet. And after the venerable disciples had finished their greeting ministrations, they sat by his side. And the Blessed One spoke to the venerable Anuruddha as follows : “ How do you do, O Anuruddha ? Have you enough to live on ? Have you no need of alms ? ” “ We are doing well, O Blessed One. We have enough to live on, O Blessed One, and we have, O Lord, no need for alms.” “ Do you live together, O Anuruddha, in concord, without strife, peaceably looking at each other with friendly eyes.” “ We live together, O Lord, in concord, without strife, peacefully viewing each other with loving eyes.” “ And how do you do this, O Anuruddha ? ” “ I think, O Lord, that it is for me a gain and a blessing that I live together with such fellow bhikṣus. In me has grown, O Lord, towards these Venerable Ones a love which actuates openly and in secret all my deeds, words and thoughts.

I always attempt, O Lord, to suppress my own will and act according to the wills of these venerable men. And I have, O Lord, suppressed my will and acted according to the wills of these Venerable Ones. Though our bodies, O Lord, are different, our heart, I believe, is one and the same." On questioning Nandika and Kimbila the Blessed One obtained the same answer.

Attempts have sometimes been made to belittle the importance of love in Buddhism. In certain Jātakas, such as the Visvāntara Jātaka, the bodhisattva is represented as giving away his wife and children in the practice of *dāna pāramitā*. From this it is argued that heartless inhumanity passes in the eye of the Buddhist for beneficence and charity. Such a misconception apparently owes its original to a misunderstanding of the purpose and meaning of the Jātakas. As already stated, a Jātaka is a historiette, an anecdote, or a fable employed as an illustration either to convey a reproof, or point a moral, or bring out in relief some essential of Buddhahood. Most of the Jātakas are devoted to the last purpose, and in these not infrequently emphasis is placed on some one essential of bodhi without due regard being paid to the others. Thus in the Hare Jātaka stress is laid on charity (*dāna*); in the Samkhapāla Jātaka on morality (*śīla*); in the Lesser Sutasoma Jātaka on renunciation (*nishkāmya*); in the Sattubhatta Jātaka on wisdom (*pragnā*); in the Greater Janaka Jātaka on courage and fortitude (*vīrya*); in the Khantivāda jātaka on patience and forbearance (*kshānti*); in the Greater Sutasoma Jātaka on steadfastness (*adhiṣṭhāna*); in the Ekarāja Jātaka on benevolence (*maitri*); in the Lomahamsa Jātaka on equanimity (*upeksha*); and so forth. The full import of the Jātakas can be comprehended only by taking them in their ensemble. Also it must not be forgotten that the highest virtues are those that conduce to the extinction of the human race. If a selfish man and an altruist are wrecked in a desert island with only food enough for one, who will survive? The penalty of altruism, which consists in the practice of all those virtues that constitute *bodhi*, is extermination, but who will deny that the altruist is the higher type of man?

It is often said that Christianity is the only religion of love. But a closer investigation of the nature of love shows that the claim of Christianity to this title, even in its early stage, is not borne out by facts. In his *Der Buddhismus als Religion der Zukunft*\* Th. Schultze has made a searching examination of this

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\* Zweite Auflage, pp. 62-68.

question, which he concludes thus : “ If we examine those passages of the New Testament which deal with love, we find none among them in which at least an attempt is made to set forth minutely the nature of love as an internal (subjective) mental condition. They either speak approvingly of love ; or give the motive which actuates or should actuate love (such as that God has ordained it, or that God himself is love) ; or deal with the outward expression of love, its beneficial effects, and the practical relations which are, or should be, determined by it ; or simply make mention of the reward of love. What strikes us in all this is that we are involved in a circle, for, on the one hand, love is said to spring from obedience to God’s commandments, and, on the other hand, love itself is said to lead to the obeying of God’s laws.” While in Christianity love is exacted by means of external authority, loving kindness (*maitri*) is a logical consequence of the Buddhist doctrine of *nairātmya*. Again, if it is claimed that the New Testament contains a song in praise of *agapy*, the *Itivuttaka* contains an equally charming praise of *maitri*. Further, the Buddhists all over the world have strictly adhered to the ideal of their Master in extending loving kindness to all living beings, while the life of Christendom is a standing testimonial of its divergence from the ideal of the New Testament. Individually and collectively, the Christian lives his life and orders his affairs on other lines than those of the “ Sermon on the Mount.” As has been curtly put, “ the history of the Western World, since it accepted Jehovah as its Lord and Master, has been in the main the history of religious persecutions and religious wars ; and men, in perfect good faith, have proved their zeal for God by devoting the bodies of their fellowmen to the flames and their souls to the torments of Hell.” But in the whole history of Buddhism there is not a single instance of an appeal to the sword or the faggot. If the ultimate test of truth is its effectiveness in inspiring and controlling conduct, has Buddhism or Christianity the greater claim to be called the religion of love ?

X. You shall free your mind of ignorance and be anxious to learn the truth, lest you fall a prey to doubt which will make you indifferent, or to errors which will lead you astray from the noble path that leads to blessedness and peace.

The attitude of Buddhism towards doubt is unique among religions. The Buddha nowhere asks us to give our unqualified assent to propositions the truth of which is not clear and distinct. On the other hand, the Blessed One has repeatedly asked his

disciples not to accept anything merely on the authority of others, but to follow the light of evidence wherever it might lead. He has distinctly laid down that the investigation of the Dharma is one of the essentials of *bodhi*. Accordingly Buddhism does not underestimate the value of doubt during the period of investigation. But the doubt it sets store by is of that sort whose whole aim is to conquer itself by high aspiration, renewed effort, and incessant toil, and not of that other sort which, born of flippancy and ignorance, tries to perpetuate itself as an excuse for idleness and indifference. Herein lies an essential difference between Buddhism and vulgar scepticism. The sceptic regards hopeless suspense as an end in itself, but the Buddhist, ever full of hope and aspiration, treats it as a mere stepping stone to his final goal, the attainment of truth.

Brahminism regards the Veda as a revelation, and therefore says : "Thou shouldst never wrangle about Dharma and then seek to have those doubts solved into which thou mayest arrive. Let no doubts like these ever take possession of thy mind. Do thou obey what I say without scruple of any kind. Follow me like a blind man or like one, without being possessed of sense himself, has to depend upon that of another."\* Hence the Brahman has to reject the truths of science, if they do not accord with the teachings of the Veda. Thus the orthodox astronomer Brahmagupta argues in the first chapter of his *Brahmasiddhānta* against the right explanation of solar and lunar eclipses on the ground of its not being in accord with what the Veda says. He writes : "Some people think that the eclipse is not caused by the Head (*Rāhu*). This, however, is a foolish idea ; for it is he in fact who eclipses, and the generality of inhabitants of the world say it is the Head who eclipses. The Veda, which is the word of God from the mouth of Brahma, says that the Head eclipses, likewise the book *Smṛiti*, composed by Manu, and the *Samhita*, composed by Garga, the son of Brahma. On the contrary, Varahimihira, Srisena, Aryabhata, Vishnuchandra maintain that the eclipse is not caused by the Head but by the moon and the shadow of the earth in direct opposition to all and from enmity against the just mentioned dogma. For if the Head does not cause the eclipse, all the usages of the Brāhmans which they follow at the time of an eclipse, such as rubbing themselves with warm oil, and bathing and then performing certain prescribed rites, would be illusory

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\* This is the advice of Bhishma to Yudhisthira. See *Anuśāsana Parva*, Mahābhārata.

and not be rewarded by heavenly bliss. If a man declares these things to be illusory, he stands outside of the generally acknowledged dogma, which is not permitted. Manu says in his Smriti : " When the Head (Rahu) keeps the sun or moon in eclipse, all waters on earth become pure, and in purity like the water of the Ganges." The Veda says : " The Head is a son of a woman of the Daityas, called Sainaka." Hence people practice the well-known works of piety and therefore those authors must cease to oppose the generality, for everything which is in the Veda, Smriti and Samhita is true." Brahminism cannot therefore accept science without ceasing to be Brahminism.

Buddhism does not insist upon the acceptance of a revealed truth for the sake of eternal salvation. Intellectual conviction is the corner-stone of Buddhism. The weight of authority sits lightly on the mind of the Buddhist. It is possible for Christians not to correlate their religion and science, to keep their science in one pocket and their faith in another. But this is not possible to Buddhists, as the Dharma cannot be opposed to any correct view of life. Hence there is in Buddhism nothing uncongenial to the modern spirit of scientific search, the patient and impartial search after hidden truth, not so much from a craving for knowledge as for promoting human welfare. Any attempt to discredit science, in the supposed interests of tradition, by showing how imperfect the sciences at present are, will redound more to the discredit of tradition than of science. If the evidence for scientific theories is imperfect, for traditionary dogmas there is no evidence at all. Just as all sorts of inventions that depend upon scientific principles are freely used by Buddhists, so must they accept frankly all scientific conclusions so far as they appear to be true and devote themselves to the uniting of scientific truth with Buddhahood for the elevation of human life.

It is often claimed that the modern world owes its scientific spirit to Christianity. This claim is one of the features of that common tendency of highly respectable writers to attribute to the influence of the Christian religion everything good that may be found among nations professing Christianity. Would it not be truer to say that the modern scientific spirit is only a revival and development of a mental disposition which was for centuries suppressed by the persecuting tendencies of the Christian Church ?

The somewhat detailed consideration given above to the special precepts naturally leads to the discussion of certain general questions which concern them all in common. Buddhism is a

nomistic religion, that is, a religion on which the great personality of an individual founder has left an indelible impression, and as such it belongs to an advanced stage of thought. No religion or ethical system is fabricated out of the brain of one individual. The founder of a religion may modify, criticise, and even negate the beliefs and practices of his time, but he cannot ignore them. A religion without an organic historical nexus with the past will find no soil in which it can take root and receive nourishment. Here and there in the Sutras we find hints which show that the Master was trying to evolve what was known into a higher dispensation and reveal what lay concealed in it. We may, therefore, safely admit that Buddhism has its roots deep down in the great past of India, and that the Dharma represents the noblest product of the Indian mind. But there can be difference of opinion as to the Buddhists having borrowed their teachings from the Brāhmins. Whether the codes of sacred laws ascribed to Apastambha, Baudhāyana and Gautama and the so-called earlier Upanishads are really anterior to the time of Sākyamuni we have no means of deciding. Nor have we any evidence to show that the Buddha was acquainted with them, even if they were composed before him. Says Dr. G. Thibaut: "There is, so far as I know, no evidence of Buddha himself having been acquainted with philosophical views of the type of those which find their expression in the Chāndogya or Brihadāraṇyaka, and generally, I fail to see why a doctrine essentially and fundamentally non-Brāhmanical must be held to depend on Brāhmanical works in any way, even if only in the way of contrast or reaction. There may have been in Ancient India more centres of independent religious and speculative thought than is generally assumed, and the popular theory of a direct affiliation of the great systems may be a fiction."\*

Between the ethical teachings of Buddhism and the moral codes of the Brāhmins there is a remarkable difference. No doubt the earlier and later Dharma Sāstras of the Brahmins inculcate bravery, loyalty, hospitality, and prohibit stealing, lying and illegal injury to others, and in a few cases also enjoin self-restraint. "But if these laws," as Prof. E. W. Hopkins points out, "be compared with those of savage races, it will be found that most of them are also factors of primitive ethics. Therefore we say that the Hindu Code as a whole is antique and

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\* Address to the graduates of the University of Allahabad.



savage, and that, excluding religious excess and debauchery, it is on a par with the modern ethical code only nominally. In reality, however, this savage and ancient code is not on a level with that of to-day. And the reason is that the ideal of each is different. In the savage and old world conception of morality, it is the ideal virtue that is represented by the code. It was distinct laudation to say of a man that he did not lie, or steal, and that he was hospitable. But to-day, while these factors remain to formulate the code, they no longer represent the ideal virtue. Nay rather, they are but the assumed base of virtue, and so thoroughly is this assumed that to say of a gentleman that he does not lie or steal is not praise, but rather an insult, since the imputation to him of what is but the virtue of children, is no longer an encomium when applied to the adult who is supposed to have passed the point where theft and lying are moral temptations, and to have reached a point where, on the basis of these savage, antique, now childish virtues, he strives for a higher moral ideal. And this ideal of to-day, which makes fair-mindedness, liberality of thought and altruism the respective representatives of the savage virtues of manual honesty, truth-speaking and hospitality, is just what is lacking in the more primitive ideal formulated in the code of savages and of the Brāhman alike. It is not found at all among savages, and they may be left on one side. In India all the factors of the modern code are entirely lacking at the time when the old code was first completely formulated. Liberality of thought comes in with the era of the Upanishads, but it is restricted freedom. Altruism is unknown to pure Brāhminism. But it obtains amongst Buddhists who also have liberality of thought and fair-mindedness. Hence from the point of view of higher morality, one must confess that Buddhism offers the best parallel to that of to-day. On the other hand Buddhistic altruism exceeds all others.”\* Nay more; the fundamental idea of Buddhism is *maitri*, universal love.

Nevertheless some critics would make out that the ethics of Buddhism is egoistic, because its final aim is individual perfection. But a slight reflection will show the absurdity of this charge. The end of nature is neither pleasure nor happiness but perfection, the complete accomplishment of its functions. What differentiates man from other animals is his possession of certain intellectual and ethical powers. Only by the harmonious and perfect deve-

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\* E. W. Hopkins : Religions of India, pp. 535, 536.

lopment of these powers can each one of us truly realise his humanity and make himself serviceable to his fellows. True morality demands from us not only the consecration of ourselves to others but also the full development of our own power for the benefit of such consecration. Hence following the dictates of reason the true end of man can be nothing else than the perfection of his powers. If the striving after this perfection be selfish, it is such selfishness as cannot be dispensed with. A sound, good, fruitful self-love is the necessary basis for every virtue, and therefore also for a true, sound, good and fruitful love to others. As Maeterlinck says, "there is more active charity in the egoism of a clear-sighted and strenuous man than in all the devotion of the man that is blind and helpless, and before one exists for others, it behoves him to exist for himself."\* "Himself, this is the first consideration," says the Chinese *Dharmapāda*, "let him put forth his own power and attain wisdom. Profiting himself, he may then instruct others. Unwearied in his efforts, he will then gain wisdom. The enlightened man will first govern himself, then in due time he will be able to govern others. Regulating his own conduct he must necessarily ascend to the highest place. But if one cannot profit oneself, how can such a one benefit others?" Selfishness does not consist in elevating the intrinsic and social worth of oneself, but in ignoring or denying the rights, claims and worth of others. In endeavouring to attain the perfection of Bodhi, one perfects himself (*svārtha*) in order that he might work for the good of others (*parārtha*). "*Bodhichittam samutpādyā sarva satva sukkeccayā*. It is with the desire to make all beings happy that one desires to attain bodhi." So says the *Bodhicharyāvatāra*. Similarly it is said in the *Abhidharmakosavyākhyā* that the Bodhisattva desires for others supreme and temporal happiness and for himself Buddhahood as a means of realizing this service of others. Everyone must really be an end in himself, though in doing so he cannot but subserve the good of others. Without compassion, disinterestedness and altruism in various forms, the realm of the Buddha is inaccessible.

In Buddhism there can be no real morality without knowledge, no real knowledge without morality ; both are bound up together like heat and light in a flame. As Prof. E. W. Hopkins says, "in Buddha's thought there is no incompatibility between the ethical ideal and that devotion to mental training which is

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\* La Sagesse et la destinée.

prominent in early Buddhism, but is not regarded as a requisite in Christianity. Christianity seldom emphasises, even when it permits, the utmost intellectual freedom, while Buddhism establishes the faith intellectually from the beginning." What constitutes *bodhi* is not mere intellectual enlightenment, but intellectual enlightenment combined with compassion for all humanity. The consciousness of moral excellence is of the very essence of *bodhi*. "Love thy neighbour as thyself" and "love thine enemy" are indeed noble precepts, but so long as one does not understand the reason why he should love his neighbour and even his enemy, these precepts must necessarily remain a dead letter. If it is selfish to love an enemy because such love will lead one to *bodhi*, it is worse still to do good to others for the sake of rewards in heaven or for fear of punishment in hell.

Buddhism does not teach that man is by nature evil. "*Atha doshāyam āgantukuh,*" says the *Bodhicharyāvatāra*, "*satva prakṛiti pesalah.*" The evil in men is not inborn; naturally they are good." Hence for its moral precepts the Dharma seeks no external source of authority. No Buddhist regards the various moral precepts as commandments by the Buddha. Coming as they do from him whom every Buddhist takes as his model of perfection, these precepts have indeed a higher value than any commandments. But still in no sense are they commandments, for no man has any right to command his brother-men. They are but the ways pointed out by the Blessed One for avoiding the evils of life, and he who does not tread on the path shown will have to bear the consequences. Though there are neither rewards nor punishments in a future world, yet there is the law of cause and effect, whose sway in the domain of ethics is as powerful as in the domain of physics. The Buddhist ethical system is emphatically "a study of consequences—of *karma* and *vipāka*, of seeing in every phenomenon a reaping of some previous sowing." The tiger will necessarily be hunted down, and the criminal will necessarily be punished. Whosoever is punished for his misdeeds suffers his injury, not through the ill-will of others, but through his own evil doing. Even the undetected criminal does not escape the effect of his deeds. If he is not one of those pitiable pathological cases, if his longings, impulses, and ideals are those which inspire the average man, he cannot escape the misery flowing from his misdeeds. As the *Milindaprasna* says, "Even could one have kept it secret from men, . . . could one have kept it secret from spirits, . . . could one have kept it secret from the gods, yet one

could not have escaped oneself from the knowledge of one's sin. On doing evil a man becomes filled with remorse and the heart of him who feels remorse cannot get away from the thought of the evil he has done and obtains no peace; miserable, burning, abandoned of hope, he wastes away, and gaining no relief from depression he is, as it were, possessed with his woe." Jean val Jean may become Father Madelaine, but he cannot escape the pangs of memory. Nor can it be doubted that the criminal, though he may get on well for some time, will in the long run be eliminated from off the face of the earth as surely as the tiger is being eliminated now. Such elimination is but a part of the eternal inevitable sequence that leads man in the end to wisdom and peace.

The Buddhistic ethics is purely autonomous, and not heteronomous like the Jewish-Christian or the Hindu. In the Jewish-Christian system the moral character of a man's actions is made dependent upon his obedience or disobedience to the commands of a supernatural being, who is supposed to have revealed himself to man at some particular time in some particular way. In Hinduism the Eternal Self is made the basis of morality, but as the existence of the Eternal Self, as Saṅkara says, cannot be proved by any amount of inferential reasoning and has to be accepted solely on the authority of the Vedas, the knowledge of one action being right and another wrong rests ultimately on the authority of scripture only. But the true source of morality must be found in man himself. The moral law can be fulfilled only when its rule of life is self-imposed. As T. H. Green says in his *Prolegomena to Ethics*, "it is the essence of moral duty to be imposed by a man on himself. The moral duty to obey a positive law, whether a law of the State or the Church, is imposed not by the author or imposer of the positive law, but by that spirit of man which sets before him the ideal of a perfect life." Still it is claimed for the *Advaita Vedānta* that the recognition of an identity between *Brāhman*, the Eternal Self, and the *ātman*, the individual self, can furnish the necessary basis for morality. To the enlightened man all differences vanish, and everything is Self (*tattvamasi*). This claim is spurious. For, moral considerations pertain only to the world of differences (*samsāra*) and so long as one is in *samsāra* one does not rise to the recognition of the identity of the individual self with the Eternal Self. Further, the *jīvanmukta*, the wise man who has perceived the identity of the individual self with the Self written with a

capital S, is not, according to the teaching of the Advaitins, subject to moral law. As Anandgiri, the direct disciple of Saṅkara, says, the perfect sage may do good and evil for the rest of his days as he pleases, and incur no stain. Anandgiri's view is supported by such texts as the following: "He that knows the truth is sullied neither by good actions nor by evil actions." "If he sees the unity of all things, he is unaffected alike, whether he offers a hundred horse sacrifices or kills hundreds of holy Brahmanas." "He whom nobody knows either as noble or ignoble, as ignorant or learned, as well-conducted or ill-conducted, he is a Brāhmaṇa. Quietly devoted to his duty, let the wise man pass through life unknown; let him step on this earth as if he were blind, unconscious, deaf." Such views are the logical outcome of the pantheistic doctrines of the Vedantic theosophy. If everything in the universe be nothing but a manifestation of the universal soul, how can any thing or act be unclean or immoral? This is how the Hindu Aghorpanthi defends his disgustingly repulsive acts. No wonder that the Vedantin generally likens a perfect sage to a child, to an imbecile, or to one obsessed.

Even if the Eternal Self existed, it could have no value in ethical considerations. Being an eternal spiritual principle, the Eternal Self transcends all time. But all ethical questions deal with empirical wants and aspirations which are time processes. How can the self-same Eternal Self be enriched by acts of virtue or impoverished by vice? Can it be affected by all the vicissitudes of life and still retain its timeless self-sameness? What part can such a "self" play in ethical life? Perhaps it may be said that morality consists in the realization of the Eternal Self. But if one's Eternal Self is real already, what has one to realize? He might, for aught we know, be realising his Eternal Self as much in a vicious life as in virtuous deeds, in indolence as much as in strenuousness. *Be yourself!* may be a valuable moral precept to such as have already framed for themselves a worthy idea of manhood, but for others it can convey no meaning.

That moral ideas have nothing to do with the belief in supernatural beings does not need much reasoning to prove. Supernatural beings are but creations of human fancy, and can be endued only with such qualities as man already possesses. How can a man love and reverence what he has not seen, unless he has already learnt to love and reverence what he has seen? Nor is man ethical for fear of an invisible police. Does a man

love his parents, wife or children because otherwise he would be punished for it ? Does not history prove that the greatest iniquity is quite compatible with the fear of God and a belief in hell ? Let us not forget Papal Rome. Let us not forget the tradition that the famous Vishnuite temple at Srirangam was built by robbing a famous Buddhist temple at Negapatam of its image of gold. Further, many people attribute to their gods vices from which they would themselves shrink with horror. When the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* was narrated by the sage Suka to king Parikshit, the latter, after listening to the account of Krishna's debaucheries, was amazed how he who became incarnate "for the establishment of virtue" and the repression of vice and who was "the expounder, author, and guardian of the bulwarks of righteousness," could be guilty of such corrupt practices. The answer to this very pertinent question is : "The transgression of virtue and the daring acts which are witnessed in superior beings must not be charged as faults to these glorious persons . . . Let no one other than a superior being ever even in thought practise the same. . . . The word of superior beings is true, and so also their conduct is sometimes : let a wise man observe their command which is right. . . . Since Munis are uncontrolled and act as they please, how can there be any restraint upon him (the Supreme Deity) when he has voluntarily assumed a body." So supernatural beings are entitled to dispense with moral laws, which men are not competent to violate. Why then should we suppose that the belief in supernatural beings is essential for the knowledge of right and wrong ?

The belief in future rewards and punishments in an invisible world may influence men's conduct, but it cannot be a moral force. "Could he be really honest, could he be called really virtuous," says Immanuel Kant, "who will gladly give himself up to his favourite vices if he feared no future punishment, and must not one rather say that he indeed shuns the practice of evil, but nourishes in his soul a vicious disposition ; that he loves the advantage of conduct seemingly virtuous, while he hates virtue itself ?" Nor is the hope of a future life helpful to the ethical life. As pointed out by Professor Caird in his *Evolution of Religion*, "the belief in immortality may easily become an unhealthy occupation with a future salvation, which prevents us from seeking for salvation for mankind here. . . . If the empirical evidences for a future life . . . have for some of us lost their convincing power, this, in a religious point of view may not be

altogether a loss. . . . The spiritual may gain all that the supernatural has lost."

Buddhism rejects both of these flimsy supports for the moral life. It makes the basis of morality purely subjective. It appeals to the natural needs of man. Man desires to get rid of the sorrows and sufferings of this life; he desires to enjoy endless bliss. How can he attain this? First of all, as the *Bodhi-charyāvātāra* argues, *punyaṃ* makes the body happy. If a man is compassionate and serviceable to others, they will not prove a source of trouble to him. No man can realise all his desires without the help of others. Hence if he desires the help of others, he must have sympathy and compassion for them. As they also desire happiness, he must endeavour to get rid of their sufferings and sorrows. How can the suffering of one affect another? In the same way as the suffering of one's foot affects one's hand. Though the body consists of different parts, we treat it as one and protect it. Similarly there may be different beings in this world, still they should all be treated as one, for all are endeavouring to avoid suffering and attain happiness. One's body is the product of the combination of the sperm and the germ of others, but by custom one speaks of one's body as one's own. If what is the product of others can be regarded as one's self, where is the difficulty of regarding the bodies of others as one's own? That one is always the same person is not true; yet one imagines oneself to be the same person. Is it more difficult to imagine one's oneness with others? If there is no *ātman*, all beings are equally void. Is not then the fundamental oneness of all beings obvious (*parātma samatā*)? Such is the manner in which the Buddhist argues. For the ordinary Buddhist the doctrine of Karma may serve as the all-important motive force for the moral life. But for the wise man the main-stay of morality is the internal perception of *nairātmya*, the realization of the selflessness (*ṣuṇyata*) of all beings and the consequent fundamental equality of all beings with one another. It is this realization which forms the well-spring of cheerfulness (*mudita*), compassion (*karuṇa*), and benevolence (*maitrī*), which are the bases of all good deeds.

With deep insight did the Blessed One perceive two thousand years ago truths which modern science declares to us at the present day. "Man," teaches Science, "is but a single cell in the organism of humanity. His worth as an individual is nothing apart from the rest of the organism. Apart from other human beings the individual cannot be so much as begotten and born.

All his latent powers he owes to the ancestral lives that are seeing within his eyes and listening within his ears. Even his natural endowments and capabilities can find no suitable employment and proper development apart from the society of other human beings. Only in and with the grand life of mankind as a whole can the individual live as a human being. Not only has he been produced by the vital energies of mankind, but they also maintain him till death. With the elevation of humanity the individual rises in the scale of being, and with its downfall he degenerates. Being but an insignificant episode in the life of mankind, he can lay no claim to everlasting life. But as the generations before him have contributed to his being, so can he also contribute to the well-being of future generations. If the individual desires perpetual life, he can secure it only by living in the whole and for the whole. Hence what is good for all mankind, what creates better conditions for its existence and its perfection, is also good for the individual. What jeopardises the life of humanity or degrades it is also bad for him. A perfected humanity is his heaven, a decaying humanity is his hell. To preserve and enhance the worth of human life is virtue ; to degrade humanity and lead it to perdition is vice."

If a man desires to hasten his deliverance from sorrow and suffering, he must necessarily follow the laws of the good. This motive is indeed individualistic, but it alone can work with dynamic precision. A man will necessarily desist from injuring others, if he sees clearly that his interests are bound up with theirs. He will even forego some of his own goods for the sake of others, if he is sure that his sacrifice will redound to his own advantage. A man will not hate his enemy, if he knows that the love of his enemy will carry him forward to *bodhi*. No man loves others merely from his love for them. On the other hand he loves others because for some reason they please him. In the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* Yāgnavalkya says rightly to his wife Maitreyi : " Not out of love for the husband is a husband loved, but the husband is loved for love of self. A wife is loved, not out of love for the wife, but for love of self. Children are loved, not out of love for children, but for love of self. Wealth is loved, not out of love for wealth, but for love of self. The priestly order is loved, not out of love for that order, but for love of self. The order of the warrior is loved, not out of love for that order, but for love of self. The states are loved, not out of love for the states, but for love of self. The gods are loved, not out of love



for the gods, but for love of self. Existence is loved, not out of love for existence, but for love of self. Not out of love is any loved, but for love of self are all loved." King Prasenajit once asked his wife Mallika : " Have you ever loved any better than yourself ? " With surprising naïveté she answered : " Truly, great king, I have not loved any one better than myself." Undaunted the king said the same thing of himself, and they both communicated their conversation to the Blessed One, who good humouredly replied as follows :

" I have through all regions wandered ;  
Still have I none ever found  
Who loved another more than himself.  
So is one's own self dearer than another,  
Therefore out of love to one's own self  
Doth no one injure another."

In Buddhism morality rightly rests on individualism, and altruism becomes applied individualism. No more solid basis can be found in this world for the love of one's neighbour than the love of one's self. As Hume says, " whatever contradiction may vulgarly be supposed between the selfish and social sentiments or dispositions, they are really no more opposite than selfish and ambitious, selfish and revengeful, selfish and vain. It is requisite that there be an original propensity of some kind, in order to be a basis for self-love, by giving a relish to the objects of its pursuit ; and none more fit for this purpose than benevolence or humanity. The goods of fortune are spent in one gratification or another. The miser who accumulates his annual income, and lends it out at interest, has really spent it in the gratification of his avarice. And it would be difficult to show why a man is more a loser by a generous action, than by any other method of expense ; since *the utmost which one can attain by the most elaborate selfishness, is the indulgence of some affection.*" So far from saying that men have naturally no affection for anything beyond themselves, we ought to say that though it may be difficult to find one who loves any single person better than himself, still it is as difficult to find one in whom the sympathetic affections taken together do not overbalance the selfish.

The end and aim of man cannot be the acquisition of wealth or the satisfaction of natural inclinations. But, as the Dharma teaches, it is the attainment of that perfection which consists in perfect beauty, perfect wisdom, perfect goodness and perfect freedom. Can this faith in the future perfection of mankind

inspire man with enthusiasm ? Yes ; it has acted in the past as an impelling force leading mankind upward. And there is apparently no reason why it should not be equally serviceable now or in the future. Humanity, as we see it now, consisting of poor pitiful beings, “ with their wild hopes and vain attempts to realise them, with their struggles and failures and successes more bitter than failures, or, worst of all, with the resignation of an irremediable despair : all alike, young and old, rich and poor, good and bad, drifting down the long thoroughfare of life, with no end before them but the grave,” may excite more pity than enthusiasm. But an ideal humanity, like the Buddhas ever abiding in the *Dharmakāya*, would necessarily arouse in man an enthusiasm driving to action. “ The mind by an original instinct tends,” says Hume, “ to unite itself with the good, and to avoid the evil, though they be conceived merely in idea, and be considered to exist in a future period of time.” And history shows how strongly man has been moved by the contemplation of ideal objects, whose existence he may not assert. Nay more ; history proves how men have sacrificed their possessions, their blood, and their everything for ideal aims. Even in superstitious belief the most effective part has been similar to that which we have in the objects of imagination. Nor is an ideal at any time absolutely non-existent. It is always partially realized, even though the extent of such realization may be infinitesimally small. In man are always present the traces of what he may become, the germs of enlightenment that even in savage bosoms stir up.

“ Longings, yearnings, strivings  
For the good they comprehend not.”

## CHAPTER IV

### BUDDHISM AND CASTE

“THE Tathāgata recreates the whole world like a cloud shedding its waters without distinction. He has the same sentiments for the high as for the low, for the wise as for the ignorant, for the noble-minded as for the immoral. His teaching is pure, and makes no discrimination between noble and ignoble, between rich and poor. It is like unto water which cleanses all without distinction. It is like unto fire which consumes all things that exist between heaven and earth, great and small. It is like unto the heavens, for there is room in it, ample room for the reception of all, for men and women, boys and girls, the powerful and the lowly.” Such were the words in which Gautama Sākyamuni impressed on his disciples the universality of the salvation he brought into the world. How this spirit of universality has been carried out in practice is well shown by the attitude of Buddhism towards the baneful Hindu institution of caste.

On one occasion Ānanda, one of the oldest disciples of the Buddha, passing by a well, where a girl of the Mātanga caste was drawing water, asked her for some water to drink. She answered : “How dost thou ask water of me, an outcaste who may not touch thee without contamination ?” Ānanda replied : “My sister, I ask not of thy caste, I ask thee water to drink.” The Chandāla girl was overjoyed and gave Ānanda water to drink. Ānanda thanked her and went his way, but the girl, learning that he was a disciple of the Blessed One, repaired to the place where the Buddha was. The Blessed One, understanding her sentiments towards Ānanda, made use of them to open her eyes to the truth, and took her among his disciples.

On the admission of this Chandāla woman into the order of bhikshunis, King Prasenajit and the Brāhmaṇas and the Kshatriyas of Srāvashti, feeling greatly scandalised, came to remonstrate with the Lord on his conduct. The Blessed One demonstrated to them the futility of caste distinctions by the following simple reasoning :

Between ashes and gold there is a marked difference, but between a Brāhmaṇa and a Chandāla there is nothing of the kind. A Brāhmaṇa is not produced like fire by the friction of

dry wood ; he does not descend from the sky nor from the wind, nor does he arise piercing the earth. The Brāhmaṇa is brought forth from the womb of a woman in exactly the same way as a Chandāla. All human beings have organs exactly alike ; there is not the slightest difference in any respect. How can they be regarded as belonging to different species ? Nature contradicts the assumption of any specific inequality among mankind.

The Brāhmaṇa is a specifically Indian phenomenon. In the neighbouring countries no Brāhmaṇa exists. In those countries there are only masters and slaves. Those who are rich are masters, and those that are poor are slaves. The rich may become poor, and the poor rich. Even in India when a Kshatriya, a Vaisya, or a Sudra abounds in wealth, the members of the Brāhmaṇa caste serve him ; they wait for his commands and use soft words to gratify him. To minister to his wants they rise before him in the morning and go not to sleep until he has retired to rest. Where then is the difference between the four castes ? The declaration of the Brāhmaṇas that they alone are the high caste, and others are of low caste is an empty sound.

If a Brāhmaṇa commits sin, he suffers for it like every other man. Like every other man the Brāhmaṇa also has to abstain from sin, if he desires salvation. Does not the ethical world order also give the lie to the theory of specific inequalities among mankind ? Are not also the native capacities and talents the same everywhere ? Is not the Sudra who is despised for his caste capable like the Brāhmaṇa of good thoughts and noble deeds ? If a bath can purify a Brāhmaṇa from dust and dirt, can it not equally purify every other man ? If water shows no special preference for the Brāhmaṇa, does fire show any special regard to differences of caste ? Does not the fire obtained by the members of the so-called highest caste by rubbing costly fragrant sticks arise just in the same way as when the members of the so-called lowest caste rub pieces of wood from a dirty foul-smelling dog-trough or swine-trough ? Further, when crossing takes place between the members of different castes, do not the children in all cases take after the mother as well as the father, and are we not able to assign them to their proper parents ? Is it not otherwise with brutes among which the crossing of a mare with an ass produces a mule ? What support then is there for supposing the existence of different species among mankind ? On the contrary, the good sense of the Brāhmaṇas themselves proves that it is the ethical worth of an individual that confers superiority. For, in

distributing alms they prefer an ethically good-natured man, even when he may exhibit no distinguishing marks, nay even when he may not have gone through the initiatory ceremony known as "second-birth." Accordingly it follows that, while it is possible to obtain exact information concerning the purity or impurity of an individual's conduct, no exact information can be obtained as regards birth and descent.

In plants, insects, quadrupeds, snakes, fishes, and birds the marks that constitute the species are abundant, whereas amongst men this is not the case. Neither the hair, nor the formation of the skull, nor the colour of the skin, nor the vocal organ, nor any other part of the body exhibits any specific differences. By birth and descent all men are alike. They become different only through differences in occupation, and they are designated accordingly. Some are called husbandmen, some artisans, some merchants, some kings, some robbers, some priests, and so on. In one and the same caste different members follow different professions. Have we not among the Brāhmaṇas physicians; necromancers; musicians; merchants; agriculturists owning cattle, poultry and slaves; wealthy landholders who give much wealth as the portion of their daughters, and receive much when their sons are married; butchers who kill animals and sell their flesh; those that provide gratification for the lust of others; those who tell lucky hours; those who sit *dhārana*; those who live like savages in the wilderness; those who get their livelihood after the manner of those who break into houses to steal; beggars with long hair, dirty teeth, immense nails, filthy bodies, and heads covered with dust and lice; and those who profess to be released from all desires and to be ready to release others also? How then can it be said that Brahma made the Brāhmaṇa for the performance of sacrifices and the study of the Veda, the Kshatriya for sovereignty and command, the Vaisya for ploughing the land, and the Sudra for obeying and serving the rest? To speak the truth:

"These Veda studies are the wiseacre's toils,  
The lure which tempts the victims whom he spoils;  
A mirage formed to catch the careless eye,  
But which the prudent passes safely by.  
The Vedas have no hidden power to save  
The traitor or the coward or the knave.  
The Brāhmans all a livelihood require  
And so for their gain they made the Vedas,  
Full of sentences in metric forms

Learned by rote and not easily forgot.  
 Their obscurity but tempts the foolish mind  
 Which swallows all 'tis told with impulse blind,  
 Doctrines and rules, absurd and vain, concocted  
 Coolly imagining wealth and power to gain.  
 They tell us that Brahma made  
 The Brāhmanas for study, the Kshatriyas for command.  
 The Vaisyas to plough and Sudras to obey the rest.  
 See we these rules enforced before our eyes ?  
 Do none but the Brāhmanas engage in study ?  
 Do none but the Kshatriyas exercise sway ?  
 Do Vaisyas plough and Sudras only obey ?  
 These greedy liars propagate deceit,  
 And fools believe the fictions they repeat.  
 The Brāhman's Veda, Kshatriya's policy  
 Both arbitrary and delusive are ;  
 They blindly grope their way along a road  
 By some huge inundation overflowed.  
 In Brāhman's Veda, Kshatriya's policy  
 One secret meaning we alike see ;  
 For after all, loss, gain and glory and shame,  
 Touch the four castes alike, to all the same.\*

If we look closely, we see no difference between the body of a prince and the body of a slave. What is essential is that which may dwell in the most miserable frame, and which the wisest have saluted and honoured. The talk of "high and low castes," of "the pure Brāhmanas, the only sons of Brahma," is nothing but empty sound. The four castes are equal. He is a Chandāla who cherishes hatred ; who torments and kills living beings ; who steals, or commits adultery ; who does not pay his debts ; who maltreats aged parents, or fails to support them ; who gives evil counsel and hides the truth ; who does not return hospitality nor render it ; who exalts himself and debases others ; who ignores the virtues of others and is jealous of their success. Not by birth, but by conduct, is one a Chandāla. He is a Brāhmaṇa† who is free from sin. He is an outcast who is angry and cherishes hatred ; who is wicked and hypocritical ; who embraces error and is full of deceit. Whosoever is a provoker and avaricious, has sinful desires, is not afraid and ashamed to commit sins, he is an outcast. Not by birth does one become an outcast, not by birth does one

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\* Adapted from Bhuridatta Jātaka.

† "A Brāhmaṇa, O king, means one who has escaped from every sort and class of becoming, who is entirely free from evil and from stain, who is dependent on himself."—*Mūlindapanha*,

become a Brāhmaṇa ; by deeds one becomes an outcast, by deeds one becomes a Brāhmaṇa.\*

“T is he is a Brāhman indeed  
Who knows the births that he has lived before ;  
And sees (with heavenly eye) the states of bliss,  
And states of woe, that other men pass through ;  
Has reached the end of all rebirths, become  
A sage, perfect in insight, *Arahat*  
In these three modes of knowledge, threefold wise  
Him do I call a Brāhmaṇa, threefold wise,  
And not the man who mutters o'er again  
The mystic verse so often uttered through before.”†

From the point of view of religion the Dharma makes no difference between one caste and another. In the *Saddharma-pundarīka Sutra*, says Sākyamuni to Kāśyapa : “The Tathāgata in his educating creatures is impartial and not partial. As the light of the sun and moon shines upon all the world, upon the virtuous and the wicked, upon high and low, upon the fragrant and the ill-smelling ; as their beams are sent down upon everything equally, without partiality ; so too the intellectual light of the knowledge of the Tathāgata proceeds equally in respect to all beings.” In another place in the same book the Blessed One says : “It is as if a potter made different vessels out of the same clay. Some of those pots are to contain sugar, others ghee, others curds and milk ; others, of inferior quality, are vessels of impurity. There is no diversity in the clay used (no real distinction between Brāhman or Pariah, between European or Asiatic) : the diversity of the pots is only due to the substances which are put into each of them.” In this respect the Dharma differs totally from the Advaita Vedānta, though the latter borrowed so much from the Mādhyamika School of Buddhism as to be regarded by the followers of Sāmkhya philosophy as Buddhism in disguise (*pracchanna bouddham*)‡. Being an orthodox Brāhmanical system Vedānta strictly followed the teaching of Manu that “to the Sudra no man may give counsel nor teach him the doctrine or

\* Assalāyana Sutta, Mathura Sutta, Ambaṭṭa Sutta, Vaseṭṭa Sutta, and Dasa Brahma Jātaka.

† Aggañña Sutta, Digha Nikāya.

‡ Gaudapāda-kārikā is the earliest text-book of the Advaita School of Vedānta. It is, “if not a treatise from a Buddhist hand, is made up of Mādhyamika tenets.” See Louis de La Vallée Poussin's *Bouddhisme*, footnotes pp. 189 and 391 and his article in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of London*, July 1908 and Jan. 1910 ; also the first part of Max Walleser's *Der ältere Vedānta, Geschichte, Kritik und Lehre*.

uses of religion," and declared the three higher castes, the "twice born," only as spiritually qualified for salvation (*mukti*). Buddhism, on the contrary, throws its doors open to all men without any difference.

All are admitted without distinction and difficulty into the Saṅgha. Only minors, soldiers, slaves, invalids and cripples are not permitted to join the order. These are inevitable exceptions. For the defence of even the best governed country soldiers are necessary, and they cannot be allowed to give up their work without sufficient reason. But with the permission of the government they may join the order. Like minors slaves are not free, and their admission into the Saṅgha before emancipation may prove harmful to their masters. But it is not to be supposed that the Dharma encourages slavery. The Chinese *Brahmajāla Sutra* forbids slave-dealing and slave-keeping. As M. De Groot points out, "the honour of having prohibited slavery more than fifteen hundred years ago belongs to Buddhism." Still slavery was an existing institution which the Buddha had to reckon with. To take off the sting from slavery the Blessed One specially taught that masters should provide for the welfare of their slaves by apportioning work to them according to their strength, supplying suitable food and wages, tending them in sickness, sharing with them unusual delicacies and occasionally granting them holidays. In one of his rock edicts Asoka emphasises the fact that the Dharma consists in kind treatment of slaves and servants, obedience to father and mother, charity, and respect for the sanctity of life. It is opposed to the spirit of Buddhism to regard one class of men as having been created for the purpose of serving another class. It is possible for every one to attain that self-culture and self-control which is designated by the word Nirvāṇa, whether he be a Brāhmaṇa or a Chandāla, a white man or a black man.

Invalids and cripples are disallowed, because they are incapable of the effort needed to attain *bodhi*. For *bhikshuta* does not consist in leading an indolent and idle life, but in a strenuous active life for the good of others. "O bhikshus," says the Blessed One, "be not afraid of good works : such is the name for happiness, for what is wished, desired, dear, and delightful,—namely, good works."

For those that join the Saṅgha there is no caste. As the great streams, however many they may be, the Ganga, the Yamuna, the Achiravati, the Sarayu, the Mahānadi, when they reach the great ocean, lose their old name and their old descent, and bear



only one name, "the great ocean," so also the disciples of the Buddha, to whatever caste they may belong, when they join the order, lose their old name and old paternity and bear only the one designation of Sākyabhikshus.

Among the elders mentioned in the *Theragāthā* we find Angulimāla, the dreaded robber ; Sunita, the scavenger ; Svapāka, the dog-eater ; Svāti, the fisherman ; Nanda, the cowherd ; and Upāli, the barber. Among the bhikshunis were Ambapāli, the courtesan ; Vimalā, the daughter of a prostitute ; Pūrṇā, the daughter of a slave woman ; and Chāpā, the daughter of a hunter. The story of the conversion of Sunita, as given by himself, shows how easy it was for the members of the so-called lower classes to join the Saṅgha. Says Sunita : "I came of a humble family. I was poor and needy. The work which I performed was lowly,—sweeping the withered flowers, I was despised of men, looked down upon, and held in low esteem ; with submissive mien, I showed respect to many. Then I beheld the Buddha and his band of bhikshus, as he passed to Magadha. I cast away my burden and ran to bow myself in reverence before him. From pity for me he halted, he the highest among men ! I bowed myself at the Master's feet and begged of him, the highest of all beings, to accept me as a bhikshu. Then said unto me the gracious Master,—'Come, O bhikshu'—that was all the initiation I received. 'O bhikshu,' said the Master, 'let your light so shine before the world, that you, having embraced the religious life according to so well-taught a doctrine and discipline, are seen to be mild and forbearing.\*"

While those that joined the order had to give up caste, the Buddha does not seem to have insisted on his lay followers doing likewise. The social conditions prevalent during the time of Gautama Sākyamuni did not probably necessitate the preaching of a general crusade against caste. Caste, like every other social institution, is a product of natural growth. In the *Rig Veda* there is, with the single exception of *Purushasukta*, no clear indication of the existence of caste in the Brāhmanical sense of the word. In the Vedic hymns two classes of society, the royal and the priestly classes, are recognised as above the *vis*, or bulk of the community. But the Brāhmaṇas had not yet established their claims to the highest rank in the body politic. In the

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\* In his History of Buddhism in India Taranātha, the Tibetan Buddhist, speaks of a pupil of Aryadeva, who, though the son of a Chandāla, was acquainted thoroughly with the teaching. See Schiefner's German translation pp. 215-216,

Buddha's time the Brāhmaṇas were perhaps endeavouring to assert their superiority over the Kshatriyas. In the *Ambaṭṭa Sutta* the Blessed One claims superiority for the Kshatriya. "So it is clear, whether you regard it from the male or from the female side, that it is the Kshatriyas who are the best people, and the Brāhmaṇas their inferiors. Moreover it was the Brahma Sanam Kumāra who said—"The Kshatriya is best among folk who heed lineage. He who knows and acts aright is best among gods and men." Now this stanza Ambaṭṭa was well-sung and not ill-sung by the Brahma Sanam Kumāra, well-said and not ill-said, sensible and not senseless. I too, Ambaṭṭa, join in saying that the Kshatriya is best among folk who heed lineage."\* "There is no evidence," as Dr. Rhys Davids remarks, "to show that at the time of the rise of Buddhism there was any substantial difference in the valley of the Ganges and their contemporaries, the Greeks or Romans, dwelling on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The point of greatest weight in the establishment of the subsequent development, the supremacy in India of the priests, was still being hotly debated. All the new evidence tends to show that the struggle was being decided rather against than for the Brāhmans. What we find in the Buddha's time is caste in the making. The great mass of people were distinguished quite roughly into four classes, social strata, of which the boundary lines were vague and uncertain. At one end of the scale were certain outlying tribes and certain hereditary crafts of a dirty or despised kind. At the other end the nobles claimed the superiority. The Brāhmans by birth (not necessarily sacrificial priests, for they followed all sorts of occupations) were trying to oust the nobles from the highest grade. They only succeeded long afterwards, when the power of Buddhism had declined."†

The caste distinctions which might have obtained among the Buddhist laity in India had no religious consecration. They had only a social significance. An incident in the life of Emperor Asoka illustrates clearly the position of caste among the Buddhist laity in India. After Asoka became a Buddhist, it was his custom, whenever he met Buddhist bhikshus to salute them, touching their feet with his head. On one occasion the minister said to the Emperor: "My Lord, it is not seemly for thee thus to

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\* In the *Mahābhārata* (*Vanaparva*) Sanatkumāra says: "The Kshatriya is the best of those among this folk who put their trust in lineage. But he who is perfect in wisdom and righteousness is the best among gods and men."

† *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Art. Buddhism.

prostrate thyself before bhikshus of all castes." To this the Emperor answered: "Yea, by a sentiment of pride and delusion, fostered by beauty and power, dost thou desire to dissuade me from prostrating myself at the feet of the Religions. And if my head, that worthless object, which no man desires even when he may obtain it for nothing, meet an occasion for purification and acquire some merit thereby, what is there unlawful in that? In the Sākyabhikshus thou regardest nought save caste and thou beholdest not their virtues; wherefore, puffed up with pride of birth, thou forgettest in thy error both thyself and others. Caste may be considered when it is a question of marriage or of an invitation, but not of the Dharma; for the Dharma is concerned with virtues, and virtues have nought to do with caste. When a man of high birth falls into vice, he is blamed by the world; wherefore when a man of low caste is virtuous should he not inspire respect? It is by reason of their characters that men's bodies are despised or honoured. The Sākyabhikshus should be revered, for their character has been purified by the words of the Compassionate One."

In his proselytising missions the Buddhist did not carry caste with him as an essential element of his religion. But it has been different with Hinduism, that is to say, that religion which refers to Brāhmanic scriptures and tradition for its orthodoxy, which worships the Brāhmanic deities and their incarnations, which holds the cow in veneration and attributes purificatory efficacy to its urine and dung, which enjoins certain rules concerning intermarriage and interdining and which enforces the presence of a Brāhmaṇa at all ceremonies. Hinduism proselytises by means of its system of castes. People who do not observe the rules of caste are *mlechchās*. Mlechchās become Hindus by accepting the system of castes. Any number of outsiders may be brought within the fold of the Hindu religion so long as they are willing to form themselves into a new caste without interfering with the existing castes, to submit themselves to the Brāhmaṇas and pay them. The casteless aboriginal tribes of India have become Hindus by accepting the prejudices of Brāhmanism and conforming to the system of castes. History shows how Rajputs have been manufactured from ambitious aborigines and foreign immigrants. In no Buddhist country at the present day we find any traces of the system of castes. The Burmese language has no word for caste. The idea of caste is entirely strange to the Buddhist Newars of Nepal, with whom the equality of birth is absolute,

In Hinduism caste distinctions have not only a social but also a religious significance. The social position of a Hindu, even the signs by which he may be known and described, belong to his religion. A man is not a Hindu, because he inhabits India, or belongs to any particular race or nationality, but because he is a Brāhmanist. One is a Brāhmaṇa, a Kshatriya, a Vaisya, or a Sudra solely by his birth. The status of a Brāhmaṇa, it is said, is incapable of acquisition by a person belonging to any of the three other orders. That status is the highest with respect to all creatures. We are told in the *Mahābhārata*: "From the order of brute life one attains to the status of humanity. If born as a human being, he is sure to take birth as a Pukkasa or a Chandāla. One having taken birth in that sinful order of existence, one has to wander in it for a very long time. Passing a period of one thousand years in that order, one attains next to the status of a Sudra. In the Sudra order one has to wander thirty thousand years before one acquires the status of a Vaisya. After wandering for a time, that is, sixty times longer than what has been stated as the period of the Sudra existence, one attains to the Kshatriya order. After wandering for a time that is measured by multiplying the period last named by two hundred, one becomes born in the race of such a Brāhmaṇa as lives by the profession of arms. After a time measured by multiplying the period last named by three hundred, one takes birth in the race of a Brāhmaṇa that is given to the recitation of the *Gāyatrī* and other *mantras*. After a time measured by multiplying the last named by four hundred, one takes birth in the race of such a Brāhmaṇa as is conversant with the Vedas and the scriptures." Only the Brāhmaṇa as such, by subjugating joy and grief, desire and aversion, vanity and evil speech, can attain salvation. Hence the Brāhmaṇa is something transcendently divine. "By his very origin the Brāhmaṇa is a god, even to the gods." "A Brāhmaṇa, whether he be learned or unlearned, is a great divinity." He shall not rise to receive a Kshatriya or a Vaisya, though they may be learned. The Brāhmaṇas should not even bow to the images of the gods worshipped in a Sudra's house. If a Brāhmaṇa serves a Sudra, he commits a sin which can be wiped off only by bathing for three years at every fourth meal time. A Brāhmaṇa may seize without hesitation, if he be distressed for a subsistence, the goods of a Sudra. If a Sudra comes as a guest to a Brāhmaṇa, he shall first be made to do some work and then be fed. Immoral Brāhmaṇas shall be worshipped, but not Sudras even though they

may have subdued their passions. Although Brāhmaṇas may employ themselves in all sorts of mean occupation, they must invariably be honoured. The kingdom of that king, says Manu, who stupidly looks on while a Sudra decides causes, shall sink like a cow in deep mire. The duty of the Sudra cannot be any other than servitude, because such a man was created by the self-existent for the purpose of serving Brāhmaṇas. A Sudra, though emancipated by his master, is not released from a state of servitude ; for from a state natural to him by whom can he be divested ? In the very nature of things the Sudra can have no claim to salvation, for by his birth he has no spiritual capability for it.

Attempts have been made to liken the Indian castes to the trade guilds of Mediæval Europe. But the difference between the caste and the guild are more striking than their common features. For one thing the guilds never forbade a man to marry outside his own guild nor had they objection to admit apprentices from other guilds or from the outside community. Members of different guilds ate together and in the defence and assertion of their common interests the various guilds joined together, but the tendency of caste is to split up into sub-divisions of an exclusive kind. The guilds did much to improve the industries which they represented, but the influence of caste has not been favourable to the development of Indian art. There were trade guilds in India but the guild was not only distinct from the caste but often antagonistic to it. "The trade guilds represented the revolt against the restrictions of caste in the sphere of commerce and industry. The time of the full sway of the guilds coincides with the period of the greatest Buddhist influence and it was in the provinces where Buddhism was strongest, that the merchant guilds were most firmly established ; in fact the organisation failed altogether to take root beyond the favouring reach of Gautama's teaching. To a large extent under religious influence the guilds showed a measure of independent power and were to some degree successful in their efforts to raise the labourers and artisans in their own estimations as well as in that of others. To some extent the guilds were organised on the basis of occupations as defined by caste but the idea of association for mutual protection\*as in the case of the guilds of the West affected their character and enlarged their scope. Membership was open to all workers at a certain trade and a man was free to apprentice his son to a trade different from that of his own caste. Cases of this kind were not

general but that occurred with sufficient frequency to show that occupation was not in the days of the guilds determined by caste and that caste divisions were not maintained by function. An apprentice set to learn a new trade remained in his father's caste so long as he obeyed the rules, but as a worker he had equal rights with members of other castes who were following the same trade. No one not a guild member could practise any trade within the community over which the guild representing that trade had authority. The guilds fixed hours of work, wages and holidays, and the merchant guilds levied a toll on the trade of their members. Decisions were enforced and punishments exacted by means of the boycott and expulsion from the guild involved in all cases excommunication from the caste. When the zeal of the Buddhist revival began to grow cold and the power of the Brāhmanical priesthood again began to predominate, the guilds began to decline or to degenerate into mere caste organisations. In the East, as in the West, the going of the guild has left the workers disorganised in the face of a growing industrialism whose tendency is to destroy the sense of any common interest existing between capital and labour. Still the guilds have had some permanent influence in India in preserving to trade and labour what measure of dignity and honour they still enjoy in creating a corporate conscience, and in counteracting the evils that would have prevailed had caste been left unfettered to work its way in Indian life."

At this distance of time we cannot say precisely how the system of castes originated. But there can be no doubt that community of race has had more to do with its origin than community of function. In the earliest times the Aryan immigrants seem to have been a homogeneous community scantily supplied with women, which speedily outgrew its original habitat. A company of the more adventurous spirits set out to conquer for themselves new domains among the neighbouring Dravidians. They went forth as astrologers and sorcerers taking with them few women or none at all. They influenced the darker race, established themselves as priests and took women according to their needs. Then they found themselves cut off from their original stock, partly by the distance and partly by the alliances they had contracted. By marrying the women of the other race they had to some extent modified their original type; but a certain pride of blood remained in them, and when they had bred females enough to serve their purposes and to establish a distinct *jus connubii*,

they closed their ranks to all further intermixture of blood. When they did this, they became a caste like the castes of the present day. Complete amalgamation with the darker race did not take place as the immigrants only took women and did not give them. They behaved in fact towards the Dravidians whom they brought under their sway in exactly the same way as some planters in America behaved towards the African slaves whom they imported.

Whatever may have been the origin of the system of castes, there can be no doubt that its development is largely due to the ambition and selfishness of those who profited by it. Just as among the ancient Romans the pontifices became mighty and influential owing to their knowledge of all the important details of sacrificial ceremonies, so did the Brāhmaṇas become powerful in India through their knowledge of the sacrificial arts. The system of castes was indeed profitable to the Brāhmaṇas and naturally they fostered and turned it to their own advantage. Thus, in the *Āitareya-Brāhmaṇa* we read: "Verily the gods do not eat the food offered by the king who is without a Purohita: wherefore let the king, who wishes to sacrifice, place a Brāhmaṇa at the head." The king had to propitiate each one of the five destructive powers of the Purohita to obtain *svarga*. The five ways of propitiation were by servile speech, by washing his feet, by adorning him, by satiating his belly, and finally by welcoming him to the seraglio in order that he might quench the "burning blazing fire of his Upastha." Wherever the Brāhmaṇas went, they sought to perpetuate their own social ascendancy by inculcating the doctrine of their own superiority as custodians of a divine revelation and as expounders of sacred laws. Wherever they spread over India, they defined the duties and privileges of the different classes, assigned to them definite places in the graduated scale of the community, and secured for themselves the best places. The attitude of the later Buddhists towards the claims arrogated to themselves by the Brāhmaṇas is best illustrated by the *Vajrasūchi*, a small tract ascribed to Asvagosha, the well-known author of the *Buddhacharita*, who lived in the latter half of the first century before Christ. The argument of the *Vajrasūchi* may be thus summarised.

Granted that the Vedas, the Smritis and the Dharmasastras are true and valid, and that all the teachings at variance with them are invalid, still the assertion that the Brāhmaṇa is the highest of the four castes cannot be maintained.

What is Brāhmanhood? Is it the life principle (*jīva*); or descent; or the body; or learning; or rites (*āchāra*); or acts (*karma*); or knowledge of the Vedas?

If the life principle constituted Brāhmanhood, how could, as is stated in the Vedas, quadrupeds and other animals have become gods? According to the *Mahābhārata* seven hunters and ten deer of the hill Kalinjala, a goose of the lake Mānasasāra, a Chakravāka of Sharadvipa were born as Brāhmaṇas in Kurukshetra, and became very learned in the Vedas. In his *Dharmasastra* Manu says: "Whatever Brāhmaṇa learned in the four Vedas with their *angas* and *upāngas* receives gifts or fees from a Sudra, shall for twelve births be an ass; for sixty births a hog, and seventy births a dog." Hence it is evident that it is not the life principle that constitutes Brāhmanhood.

If Brāhmanhood depended on descent or parentage, how could this be reconciled with the statement of the *Smṛiti* that many Munis had no Brāhmaṇa mothers? Achala Muni was born of an elephant; Keça Pingala of an owl; Suka Muni of a parrot; Kapila of a monkey; Sringa Rishi of a deer; Vyāsa from a fisherwoman; Kausika Muni from a female Sudra; Parāsara from a Chāndalini; and Vasishtha from a strumpet. Visvāmītra, though a Kshatriya, became the founder of a Brāhmaṇa family. Kānvāyana Brāhmaṇas trace their descent from Ajamidha, a Kshatriya. The two sons of Nābhāgarishta, who were Vaisyas, attained to the state of Brāhmaṇas. If one born of a Brāhmaṇa father or mother is a Brāhmaṇa, then even the child of a slave (*dāsa* or *dāsi*) may become a Brāhmaṇa. If he alone is a Brāhmaṇa whose father and mother are both Brāhmaṇas, then it must be established that the parents themselves are pure Brāhmaṇas. But the mothers of the parent race of Brāhmaṇas are not, any of them, free from the suspicion of having committed adultery with Sudras. "In human society," says Yudhsthira in the *Mahābhārata* (*Vanaparva*), "it is difficult to ascertain one's caste, because of promiscuous intercourse among the four orders. This is my opinion. Men belonging to all the orders begot (promiscuously) offspring upon women of all the orders. And of men, speech, sexual intercourse, birth and death are common. And to this the Rishis have borne testimony, by using at the beginning of a sacrifice, such expressions as—'of what caste soever we may be, we celebrate the sacrifice.' " Further, according to the *Mānavadharmasāstra* a Brāhmaṇa who eats flesh loses instantly his rank; and also he who sells wax, or salt, or milk, becomes a



Sudra in three days. If Brāhmanhood depended upon birth, how could it be lost by any acts however degrading? Can an eagle by alighting on the earth be turned into a crow?

Is the body then the Brāhmaṇa? Then fire will become the murderer of a Brāhmaṇa, when it consumes his corpse, and such also will be every one of the relatives of a Brāhmaṇa, who may consign his body to the flames. Again, every one born of a Brāhmaṇa, though his mother be a Sudra, will be a Brāhmaṇa, being bone of the bone and flesh of the flesh of his father. But according to the *Mahābhārata* the son that is begotten by a Brāhmaṇa upon a Sudra wife is called *Pārāsava*, implying one born of a corpse, for a Sudra woman's body is as inauspicious as a corpse. Again, the virtue of the holy acts sprung from the body of a Brāhmaṇa is not, according to the Brāhmanical theories, destroyed by the destruction of his body. Hence Brāhmanhood cannot consist in the body.

Is it learning that constitutes Brāhmanhood? If that were the case, many Sudras must have become Brāhmaṇas from the learning they possessed. Many Sudras, even *Mlechchas*, are masters of the four Vedas, of Vyākaraṇa and Jyotisha, of the Mimāṃsa and the Vedānta, and of Sāṃkhya, Nyāya and Vaisheshika philosophies; yet not one of them is or ever was called a Brāhmaṇa. Nor can *āchāra* and *karma* be said to constitute Brāhmanhood. For many Sudras are everywhere following practices appropriate to Brāhmaṇas, and are performing the severest and most laborious acts of piety.

Why then should the higher life be prohibited to the Sudra? Why is it laid down that for the Sudra service and obedience paid to Brāhmaṇas are enough? Is it because in speaking of the four castes the Sudra is mentioned last? How can the order in which certain beings are named or written affect their relative rank and dignity? Does the Sudra become the lowest and meanest of beings, because his name is mentioned after the dog in a certain sutra? Are the teeth superior in dignity to the lips, because we find the latter placed after the former for the sake of euphony in some grammatical rule? No; nor any more is it true that the Sudra is vile and the Brāhmaṇa high, because we are used to repeat the *chatur varṇa* in a particular order. And if this is untenable, the inference from it that the Sudra must be content to serve and obey the Brāhmaṇa falls likewise to the ground.

Again, if as the Brāhmaṇas say all men proceed from one Brahma, how then can there be a fourfold insuperable diversity among them? If one has four sons by one wife, the four sons, having one father and mother, must all be essentially alike. Among quadrupeds, birds, trees, we see differences of conformation and organization whereby we can separate them into distinct species. But all men are formed alike without and within, except in such non-essential differences as are observed in the children of one and the same parents. It is therefore evident that all men belong to one species. Further, in the jack-tree the fruit is produced from the stem, the joints and roots as well as the branches. Is one fruit therefore different from another so that we may call that produced from the roots the Sudra fruit? Surely not; nor can men be of four distinct species, because, as the Brāhmaṇas assert, they sprang from four different parts of one body. Besides, a Brāhmaṇa's sense of pleasure and pain is not different from that of a Chandāla. Both are born in the same way, both sustain life in the same manner, and both suffer death from the same causes. They differ neither in intellectual faculties nor in their actions, nor in the aims they pursue, nor in their subjection to fear and hope. Accordingly the talk of four castes is fatuous. All men are of one caste.

When such onslaughts of the Buddhists began to tell on Brāhmanism, various attempts seem to have been made by the Brāhmaṇas to bolster up their religion. The result of one such attempt is apparently the *Mahābhārata*. The post-Buddhistic character of the *Mahābhārata* is proved by its referring in xii, 15, 32 to "those who cast off the Vedas and wander about as beggars shaved and wearing the yellow robe." The time of the whole *Mahābhārata* may generally speaking be taken as falling between 200 and 400 A.D. Whatever may be the original motive of the *Mahābhārata*, there can be no doubt that the existing version is the result of a revision at the hands of Brāhmaṇas for sectarian and caste purposes during the revivalistic period of Hinduism. It is an encyclopædia of mythology, philosophy, history and the sacred law and has now the status of a 'fifth Veda' (*pañchamaveda*), intended specially for the unlettered classes, including the upper divisions of the Sudra caste, the so-called *Sacchudras*. What was the necessity for a fifth Veda? The answer is obvious. The scriptures of the heretical Buddhists were open to all without distinction of caste or creed. But the Brāhmanical Vedas could be read only by the twice-born. Hence

to cope with their Buddhist rivals the Brāhmaṇas had to fabricate a book which could be accessible to the non-dvija, and even some concessions had to be made to him. It is therefore declared in iii 216, 14-15 and xiii 143, 46 that a Sudra not only may become *asaṃskrito dvijah* hereafter, but that he should be revered (*senyah*) like a regenerate person, if he is "pure of heart and of subdued senses," since "not birth, nor sacrament, nor learning, nor stock. (*Santatiḥ*) make one regenerate, but only conduct" is the cause of regeneration. What Brāhmanism, pure and simple, teaches in regard to the Sudra is clear from the Brāhmaṇas and the Sūtras, and we do not find the abovementioned teaching even in the Upanishads. It is pure Buddhism taught as Brāhmanism. But it would be too much for the Brāhmaṇas to admit unreservedly as the Lord Buddha did, that all men could free themselves from sin and attain the status of a Brāhmaṇa. That would be only setting a premium on the teaching of the great Kshatriya reformer. Hence the Mahābhārata openly exalts the Brāhmaṇas and covertly dissuades the members of the other castes not to follow the teachings of the Kshatriya Sākyamuni. Thus Vāsudeva asks Mother Earth: "By what act does a man leading the domestic mode of life succeed in cleansing all his sins?" Mother Earth's plain answer is: "One should serve the Brāhmaṇas. A Brāhmaṇa by birth alone, becomes an object of adoration with all creatures." In another place a Chandāla performing austere penance is told that "this object of thy desire, the status of a Brāhmaṇa, which is the foremost of everything is incapable of being won by penances."

As the influence of the Kshatriya teacher on the popular mind was very great, a new Kshatriya hero had to be fabricated out of Krishna,\* the black god of the clouds, and invested with all the qualities of Māra, the enemy of Buddha. The Buddhists regard a Buddha as a man born to save the human race from impending ruin, whenever sin and ignorance gain the upper hand in this world. Thus in the *Saddharmapundarikam* the Buddha

\* In the *Matsya Purāna* where the festival of Kāma (the Buddhist Māra) is described, Kama is identified with Krishna himself. In the *Lalitā Vistara* Krishna is mentioned once among the number of the greatest deities, but usually the chief of the black demons; and Māra, the great enemy of Buddha and his mission, is called the ally of Krishna (*Krishnabandhu*). For the Jains Krishna is the ninth of the black Vasudevas. The *Gita* itself admits that those who worship Krishna as the All-God, or recognise him, are few in number: *Vāsudevaḥ sarvaṃ iti sa mahatma sudurlābhah* (7, 19 "He (as All-God) in human form, not recognising my god head, fools despise." (9, 11).

says : " I am the Tathāgata, the Lord, who has no superior, who appears in this world to save."\* Similarly Krishna is made to say : " Whenever there is a decay of religion and there is a rise of irreligion, then I manifest myself. For the protection of the good and the destruction of the wicked, for the firm establishment of religion, I am born in every age." Religion here means, as pointed out by Saṅkara, only such religion as is indicated by castes and religious orders. In the proem to his commentary on the *Bhagavadgīta* Saṅkara says : " When, owing to the ascendancy of desire in its votaries, religion was overpowered by irreligion caused by the decreasing faculty of discrimination, and irreligion was advancing, then it was that the original Creator (Adi-Karta), Vishnu, known as Nārāyaṇa, desirous to maintain order in the universe, incarnated himself as Krishna begotten in Devakī by Vasudeva, for the preservation of the 'earthly Brāhmaṇa,' of the class of the Brāhmaṇas on the earth. For it was by the preservation of the class of the Brāhmaṇas that the Vedic religion could be preserved, since on that class all distinctions of caste and religious order depended." Conformably to this are put into the mouth of Krishna the ignoble ideals contained in the *Bhagavadgīta*, which is described as the essence of all *Sāstras* and of all Upanishads (*sarvasāstrasāra*, *sarvaupanishadsāra*). The burden of this song from start to finish is the defence of the system of castes. Lord Buddha taught that every one must decide for himself according to the best dictates of conscience what his duty shall be. But Krishna tells Arjuna not to give way to the noble sentiments of love and affection which move him to desist from fighting but to follow the duty imposed on him as a Kshatriya, just in the same manner as Saṅkara defends the killing of animals in sacrifices, on the ground that such killing is enjoined by the Vedas although it may be opposed to the sentiment of humanity. No doubt an attempt is made to give the system of castes a more tenable basis. For the old doctrine that to attain salvation the members of the other castes should first become Brāhmaṇas by going through a series of births, the *Gīta* substitutes a new doctrine that " man attains salvation, devoted each to his own duty " and that the duties of Brāhmaṇas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and

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\* The Ashtami Vrata vidhāna of the Nepalese Buddhists describes the Buddha as " the endurer of ills for the benefit of existing beings." In his *Tantravārtika* Kumārila speaks of the Buddha as having declared : " Let all the evils resulting from the sin of Kaliyuga fall upon me and let the world be redeemed." This certainly was the popular belief among the Buddhists in Kumārila's day.

Sudras are divided according to the qualities of their nature. "The four castes were instituted by me according to the distribution of energies and actions. And would it be well for me to be the author of the confusion of castes and destroy these creatures? Those men, whose steps are not guided by the family or caste *dharma*, stray, of a truth into the darkness of hell and rarely get out of it. So, having an eye too to the solidarity of society, thou shouldst perform thy duty. As the ignorant act from attachment to action, so should the wise act without attachment to preserve the solidarity of society. Let no wise man unsettle the minds of ignorant people attached to action. Better is one's own duty, though destitute of merit, than the duty of another well-performed. He who does the duty ordained by his own nature suffers thereby no demerit. Nature-born duty, though faulty, one ought not to abandon, for undertaking to do another's duty is fraught with evil." Thus, in direct opposition to the Buddhists the *Gita* lays down that no one shall be permitted to decide for himself what his vocation shall be.

The real import of these teachings is very clear. They contain an admonition to the Sudra not to give up caste following the precepts of Gautama Sākyamuni and his disciples. According to Brahmanical theories the Kshatriya and the Vaisya share with the Brāhmaṇa the privilege of reading the Veda, but only so far as it is taught and explained to them by their spiritual preceptor; to the Brāhmaṇa belongs exclusively the right of teaching and expounding the sacred texts. Hence in the view of the Brāhmaṇas the greatest sin of Sākyamuni is that he, being a Kshatriya, transgressed the duties of his own class by assuming the function of a teacher and the right to receive gifts, which the Brāhmaṇas regard as their exclusive privileges; and, worse still he instructed the members of the fourth caste whom the Brāhmaṇas place outside the pale of instruction. This is exactly the charge which Kumārila Bhatta brings against the Buddha in his *Tantravārtika*. "What confidence can we have," says Kumārila, "that one who, being a Kshatriya, transgressed the duties of his own order and assumed the function of teaching and the right to receive presents, would inculcate a grave system of duty? For it has been said: 'Let every one avoid a man who practises acts destructive of future happiness. How can he who ruins himself be of any benefit?' And yet this very transgression of Buddha and his followers is conceived of as being a feather in his cap; since he spoke thus, 'Let all the evils resulting from the sin of Kaliyuga fall upon

me; and let the world be redeemed.' Thus, abandoning the duties of a Kshatriya, which are beneficial to the world, assuming the function of a teacher which belongs only to the Brāhmanas and instructing men who were out of the pale in duty enjoined by the Brāhmanas, he sought to do a kindness to others, while consenting to violate his own obligations; and for such merits as these he is praised! And all who follow his instructions, acting in contravention of the prescriptions of the *Sruti* and *Smṛiti* are notorious for their erroneous practices."\* The main object of the *Gita*, therefore, is to support covertly the domination and prestige of the Brāhman class while appearing to provide for the wants which Buddhism satisfied. Whatsoever is noble and sublime in the *Gita* is what Brāhmanism has freely borrowed from its rival and utilized for its own purposes, especially to prevent the Sudras from seceding from their old faith. The rest is a conglomerate of repetitions, contradictions, absurdities, the result of an unsuccessful attempt to reconcile all phases of orthodox opinion. No wonder that the *Gita* has been described as "the wonderful song, which causes the hair to stand on end!"

Indian literature bears testimony of the opposition of the Brāhmins to all attempts to put them on a level of equality with other Hindus. Caste has always formed the mainstay of Hinduism. "It is by means of these caste distinctions," says the Brāhman author of the *Hindu Dharma Tatva*, "that in the Bharatakhanda the Hindu religion has been so well preserved. . . . These caste distinctions are the chief support of the Hindu religion when they give way there can be no doubt that the Hindu religion will sink to destruction." It is by means of the system of caste that the Brāhmins have always carried on their proselytising operations. All outsiders, so long as they do not interfere with the existing castes, are allowed to become Hindus without giving up any of their old customs and superstitions, gods and goddesses provided they are willing to form themselves into a new caste subject to the Brāhmins. It is in this way that the uncivilized aboriginal populations have been gradually brāhmanised. We have no longer only four castes, but more than a thousand. Among the Brāhmins alone there are more than a hundred sub-divisions. Almost every trade or profession now forms a caste of its own having no social intercourse with nor patriotic feelings for the other castes. Every caste lives for itself with no feelings o

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\* See also *Ātmataṭvaviveka* by Udayanāchārya.

commiseration and pity for the sufferings of other castes. And what has been the baneful result of the parcelling of the Indian population into innumerable divisions? Anarchy being the peculiar peril of a society organised on the basis of caste, the dread of anarchy has led to absolute monarchy as the strongest defence against it. The exclusion of most of the castes from politics has left little room for the growth of feelings of common interest and public spirit. Patriotism in its true sense is a sentiment unknown to the caste-ridden Hindu. The vast continent of India with its hundreds of millions of inhabitants has for centuries been the prey of predatory conquerors. Ever since Alexander the Great conquered and humiliated India, her sovereigns have always been foreigners. India has had the unique distinction of being in succession subject to the Greeks, the Scythians, the Huns, the Arabs, the Afghans, the Mongols, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French, and the British. Foreigners have been able to ravage the country with fire and sword with the aid of soldiers raised in the country itself. A small body of foreigners suffices to keep in check a host a thousand times larger than itself.\* Not only have the Hindus lost all power of resisting foreign invasion, they have also sunk into a state of intellectual immobility. As Mr. Crozier has pointed out, "where caste is absolute, and the barriers that separate class from class are insurmountable, mere rank is everything, and practical intellect, initiative, originality, and enterprise being alike unavailing to help a man out of the sphere in which he was born are held in a minimum of regard. The consequence is that these nations have long sunk into a settled and abiding intellectual stagnation." One tendency of caste has been to produce generations of copyists incapable of any original work which is the expression of character freely exercised in choice. The multitude of irksome restrictions imposed by the system of caste upon the individual in his family and private life has not only tended to limit production but it has also destroyed adaptability and rendered inoperative those laws of supply and demand which connect communities with natural resources.

Not satisfied with the pernicious results already produced the modern upholders of Hinduism attempt to buttress caste by

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\* When he was Secretary of State for India, Lord George Hamilton once said: "This diversity of race and creed was the origin of our Empire and the secret of its strength." Says Sir John Strachey in his "India": "The existence side by side of these hostile creeds is one of the strong points in our political position in India."

scientific props. Caste, they contend, has an ethnological basis. The Sanskrit word for caste being *varṇa*, which literally means colour, it is urged that between the higher castes, the so-called Aryans, and the lower castes, there is a racial opposition more or less absolute arising from a difference in colour. Even Christianity, which makes a boast of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, has not given strength to its followers to overcome this puerile colour-prejudice. A recent writer in a Christian Missionary Magazine says : " It is an extraordinarily difficult matter, a matter in which we must distinguish between what is ideally right and practically expedient. We ask, why is this ? It is not due to the dislike of the clean for the dirty ; nor of the cultured for the barbarous. We are forced then to the answer that the reason of the cleavage between black and white is to be found in an instinctive colour-prejudice. It is the instinctive antipathy, which explains why quite devout English will not sit down to table with a cleanly well-dressed black man." Apparently neither the neo-advocates of Hinduism nor the Christian apologists of caste seem to be acquainted with the fact that difference in colour does not represent any essential difference in quality. The microscope reveals no difference between the blond and the black. The human skin, whether it be the skin of the darkest Negro or of the whitest European, always contains only dark pigment. The colour of the white European is not produced by milk or the ichor of the gods of antiquity. The pigment is everywhere the same, and it is always dark. It differs not in quality, but only in quantity. In some cases the quantity of pigment is so large that it makes its appearance on the surface, while in other cases it lies hidden in the deeper layers. But the pigment is never absent. The new-born children of all people are of the same colour and equally fair. The children of the same father and mother are not always of the same colour. The colour of the skin changes with the climate. A long stay in the tropics turns the skin of the European brown, while the skin of the Negro becomes perceptibly bleached by long residence in the temperate zone. To speak of colour-prejudice as instinctive betrays only ignorance of psychology. As Condillac said, there is no such thing as instinct. It is only a word set in opposition to all scientific explanation. Many tendencies, which are the result of environment, have become automatic in man, and it is one of the aims of true religion to destroy such automatic anti-social tendencies,



All attempts to classify mankind into races have proved a signal failure. At best the so-called races of mankind, spoken of by anthropologists and ethnologists, are only hypothetical classifications for convenient description serving just the same purpose as the theories of physical science. They are, to use an expression of Lamarck, mere products of art, the results of mental gymnastics, which have no real counterparts in nature. "Much of our modern race-theory," says Prof. Josiah Royce, "reminds me of the conversations in the 'Jungle-Book'—of the type of international courtesy expressed in the 'Truce of the Bear'—too much, I say, to seem like exact science." At the present day the unity of the origin of mankind is a fact universally accepted. Differences in the shape of the skull and in the colour of the skin, hair and eyes are the result of changes produced by environment, migration and miscegenation. No classes of men are incapable of fruitfully mixing with one another. No race of man now in existence can be said to represent a pure unvarying type. Much more than anatomical and physiological considerations, the general similarity of mental and moral endowments and the oneness of the historical development of man in all climes and countries teach us to regard all humanity as a vast brotherhood. Man everywhere possesses the same innate capacity to learn and in precisely the same degree. The mental difference between the higher and lower races, as between higher and lower classes, is a difference not of natural endowment, but of opportunity. By acquiring scientific knowledge and adopting scientific methods of education, the Japanese have completely changed their mental qualities. Other races can change their mental character as quickly as the Japanese, and history proves this abundantly.

The purity of blood for which some men stickle is a pure myth. The *varṇasaṅkrama* which the orthodox Hindu of the present day fears was accomplished centuries ago. "There is hardly a class or caste in India" says Mr. D. R. Bhandakar of Poona, "which has not foreign stain in it. There is an admixture of alien blood not only among the warrior classes—the Rajputs and the Mahrāthās,—but also amongst the Brāhmaṇas, who are under the happy delusion, that they are free from all foreign element."\* In the veins of the Brāhmans of the present day flows the blood of the Sudras of antiquity, just as in the veins of the white Europeans of to-day runs the blood of the Negroes who lived on

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\* Foreign Elements in the Hindu Population, *Indian Antiquary*, Jan. 1911.

the Continent of Europe during the quaternary period. To this intermixture is not improbably due the beauty of their women and their vitality. Dr. Tylor says that he saw the most beautiful women in the world in Tristan da Cunha among the descendants of the whites and the blacks. In South India we find the most brilliant specimens of female beauty among the freedom-loving Nair and Theeya women of the West Coast. The most remarkable examples of longevity, says M. Finot in his *Philosophie de la Longevité*, are found among Mulattoes. The infusion of new blood into families and peoples has always been productive of very beneficial results. Wherever crossing has taken place in normal conditions, the types called inferior have improved without causing any degeneracy in the representatives of the types called superior. The pessimistic assertions of the detractors of crossing are refuted by the fact that peoples who have freely mixed with one another have continuously progressed. Those who are in the vanguard of civilization and progress are those whose blood is most rich in heterogeneous elements. Even when we consider the case of superior individuals in different countries, we are astonished to find that almost all of them are the result of inter-marriages. Havelock Ellis affirms that the best American writers and thinkers are descended from mixed families. The best known among the American inventors, Mr. Edison, belongs to the same category. We might cite a host of other names if necessary. On the other hand all attempts to preserve the purity of blood have produced disastrous consequences. History demonstrates how those among the aristocracy of Europe who have kept aloof from the plebeian classes have either degenerated or died out.

It is not uncommon at the present day to find people laying much stress upon heredity. The laws of heredity, emphasised by Biometricians and Mendelians, may hold good, rigidly or approximately, of colour of eyes or hair, of stature, perhaps even of temperament and energy, but there is grave doubt whether these laws control the intellectual life. Mental qualities, being the effects of training and surroundings, are merely acquired characters. There is no evidence that they are ever inherited. On the other hand, there is overwhelming evidence that they are not inherited. The secret of mental resemblance is not inheritance but association. Example, training, development in a similar environment are sufficient to account for the mental likeness between child and parent.

Some even hope to bring into existence a race of ethical men by artificial selection and breeding, and thus to facilitate and ensure the ethical advancement of nations and thereby of all mankind. Such views and hopes could originate only from a complete misapprehension of the nature of morality. The ethical character of an individual is something purely psychical. It is so much the result of voluntary adaptation and activity that no one can definitely assert of another, or even of himself, that he has always been ethical, that is, that he has always been guided by ethical motives. Moreover, even in the highly developed ethical man, the in-born traits of average general development are so mighty that morality, which is essentially the product of individual development, can rarely be expected as a natural factor to exhibit greater power than the other factors. Were man left solely to the control of heredity, he would exhibit much more the character of an animal than of an ethical being. In short the ethical character is as little inherited as talent. Further, inherited morality, which would be lacking all the essentials of morality, such as sense of duty, freedom of resolve, etc., would have no value. The artificially bred ethical man, even if such a creature were possible, cannot stand much higher than the animal whose actions are impelled by instinct. The intellectual and ethical culture of an individual depends on voluntary conscious effort towards an end in view and has therefore to do more with education than heredity. Human nature is continually changing and is perpetuating its changes by language, arts, laws, institutions, thus creating a new environment which is more important than ancestral inheritance. Even the so-called national characteristics of the people of any country are not innate characters, but in the main expressions of different traditions. "The useful fact to emphasise," says Prof. J. A. Thomson in his *Heredity*, "is that man, though slowly or slightly variable, is rapidly and exceedingly modifiable and that social organization provides a means—an external heritage—whereby the results of modifications may be practically though not organically entailed." This means nothing else than that man is pre-eminently "made," not "born." Each child is a new beginning and the path to virtue is as open to the child of the wicked as it is to the child of the virtuous. *Janmaṇā-jāyate sudra, karmaṇā jāyate dvi-jāh*. Every one born of woman is a Sudra, but the practical life of the social environment into which one enters makes one twice-born.

"The drop of water on hot iron steams,  
 Evanishes and leaves no trace behind,  
 But falling on a lotus, pearl-like gleams,  
 And if its way into a shell it find  
 Becomes, that water drop, a pearl in sooth.  
 Its altered self by what it meets is lent ;  
 So all man's qualities in very truth  
 Arise in him from his environment."—*Bhartrihari*.

Though we may not call in question the existence of natural inequalities among men, yet we cannot but admit their fundamental equality when we consider them as rational beings and moral potentialities. The ideal goal of human progress consists in the development and exercise of those capacities which, from the highest ethical standpoint, should be cultivated and employed. This necessitates the existence of a regime in which the criteria of fitness for success will be the possession of absolutely the highest moral qualities. It naturally implies that no one shall find himself born into a social world in which one is to any degree so bound by social requirements which render it impossible for him to develop to the fullest his capacities, to refine to the fullest his desires, and to reap to the fullest the rewards of his individual merit. The impossibility of securing all this under the regime of caste, which bans certain sections of the community as hopelessly inferior to others, is obvious. Caste pride and class exclusiveness have always stood in the way of good government and the growth of liberty ; they have been the curse of the world in the past and will prove her ruin in the future.

Those in power not infrequently suppose that they are necessarily more capable of development than those whom they regard as their inferiors. Such a supposition is unwarranted by the teachings of science. One well-established fact of evolution is that in the "higher" form of a species there is a tendency to revert to the typical form, and that in the "lower" form the tendency is to rise to this typical form. Hence it would seem possible that the descendants of those who are now thought low and base might, if time and opportunity are given them, rise to the typical form of the species, and even go beyond it, while it is not impossible that the successors of those who are now regarded as representing a higher type might revert to the typical form of the species, and even degenerate to a lower condition. Of this history furnishes ample proof.

From whatever point of view we may look at the question of caste, it is something noxious. True to human nature the Buddha broke down the barriers of caste and preached the equality of all mankind. He proclaimed : " My dharma is a dharma of mercy for all. Proclaim it freely to all men ; it will cleanse the good and evil, the rich and poor alike ; it is as vast as the spaces of heaven that exclude none. Whoever is compassionate will feel the longing to save not only himself but all others. He will say to himself : ' When others are following the Dharma, I shall rejoice at it, as if it were myself. When others are without it, I shall mourn the loss as my own. We shall do much, if we deliver many ; but more if we cause them to deliver others, and so on without end.' So shall the healing word embrace the world, and all who are sunk in the ocean of misery be saved." Working in this spirit the Dharma became a religion for all, and has spread over vast tracts in Asia, India, Burma, Ceylon, Tibet, China, and Japan, and is slowly leavening the thought and life of Europe and America. May we not hope for the day when its humanising influence will be so far-reaching and deep that the prejudices of class and colour which still persist in various quarters will be forced into the limbo of forgotten things ?

" Pity and need

Make all flesh kin, there is no caste in blood,  
Which runneth of one hue, nor caste in tears  
Which trickle salt with all ; neither comes man  
To birth with *tilak*-mark stamped on the brow,  
Nor sacred thread on neck. Who doth right deeds  
Is twice-born, and who doth ill-deeds vile."

## CHAPTER V

### WOMAN IN BUDDHISM

THE wives of many noblemen, who had left their homes and joined the Saṅgha, desired to follow the example of their husbands. With Prajāpati Gautamī, the maternal aunt and foster mother of Siddārtha, as their leader, they beseeched the Blessed One to grant permission to woman also to enter the order. In strict accordance with his principles the Buddha could not refuse them admission. But he feared that the admission of women into the Saṅgha might give occasion for the heretics to speak ill of his institutions. He therefore advised Gautamī and her companions to find their lasting reward and happiness by wearing the pure white robe of the lay woman and leading a pure, chaste and virtuous life. But this advice did not satisfy Gautamī. She counselled her companions to ordain themselves, and then go to the Buddha. So they cut off their hair, put on the proper robe, and taking earthen bowls journeyed with painful feet to the Buddha. And Ānanda, the faithful attendant on the Buddha, moved by their earnestness and zeal brought their petition once again to the Master. The Blessed One admitted them into the Saṅgha with the following reply: "Are the Buddhas born only for the benefit of men? Have not Visākha and many others entered the paths? The entrance is open to women as well as men." Thus did the Buddha give woman an independent status and place her on a footing of equality with man.

Though perfectly consistent with the principles of the Dharma, which sees no difference between man and man, except that which may exist by superiority of virtue, yet the step taken by the Buddha and his followers was indeed bold, considering the depraved moral condition of Ancient India and the consequent low estimation in which woman was then held. Ancient India was notorious for the looseness of its morality. Vedic worship was highly sensual. Indra, the principal Vedic deity, was not only an indulger in the intoxicating *soma*, but also an adulterer. *Paundarikam* was a sacrifice in which the sexual act was worshipped, and which in later times developed into the worship of the phallus as Mahādeva. The priests, who spoke of themselves as the representatives of gods on earth, indulged largely in sexual debaucheries. The

priest was enjoined by a special rule not to commit adultery with the wife of another during a particularly holy ceremony, but if he could not practise continence, he might expiate his sin by a milk-offering to Varuna and Mitra. Naturally the sentiment towards woman was low. An ancient verse, cited in the *Anabhārati Jātaka*, compares womankind to highways, rivers, court-yards, hostelryes and taverns which extend universal hospitality to all alike and ends by saying that wise men never stoop to wrath at frailty in a sex so frail? We are told in the *Adiparva* of the *Mahābhārata*: "Women were formerly not immured within houses and dependent upon husbands and other relatives. They used to go about freely, enjoying as they liked best. They did not then adhere to their husbands faithfully, and yet they were not regarded sinful, for that was the sanctioned usage of the times. That very usage is followed to this day by birds and beasts without any exhibition of jealousy. That practice, sanctioned by precedent, is applauded by great Rishis. The practice is yet regarded with respect among the Northern Kurus. Indeed that usage so lenient to woman hath the sanction of antiquity." Again in the *Udyogaparva* of the same book it is said: "The birth of a daughter in the families of those that are well-behaved and high-born and endowed with fame and humility of character is always attended with evil results. Daughters when born in respectable families, always endanger the honour of their families, viz., their maternal and paternal families and the family into which they are adopted by marriage." Still worse is the description of woman given in the *Anuśāsanaparva*. Sukrati, the grandson of Janaka, the ruler of the Videhas, has declared: "There is the well-known declaration of the scriptures that women are incompetent to enjoy freedom at any period of their life. Even if high-born and endued with beauty and possessed of protectors, women wish to transgress the restraints assigned to them. There is nothing else more sinful than women." "Women are fierce. They are endued with fierce prowess. There are none whom they love or like so much as those that have sexual congress with them. Women are like those (*atharvan*) incantations that are destructive of life. Even after they have consented to live with one, they are prepared to abandon him for entering into engagements with others." The penalisation of a girl proceeds from her very birth, as the "impurity" or "untouchability" of a mother extends over thirty days when she gives birth to a daughter and only twenty days when the child is a boy.

That the Buddhist revolt against this depraved social condition proved a success is shown to us by the picture we find of it in the commentary on the *Therīgāṭhā*, a work containing verses ascribed to bhikṣuṇīs. "A good many of these verses," says Dr. Rhys Davids, "are not only beautiful in form but also give evidence of a very high degree of that mental self-culture which played so great a part in the Buddhist ideal of the perfect life. Many of the women who joined the order became distinguished for high intellectual attainments as well as for moral earnestness. Some women of acknowledged culture are represented not only as being the teachers of men and as expounding the deeper and subtler points of the Dharma, but also as having attained the Great Peace which is the final result of intellectual illumination and moral earnestness."

Buddhist sisterhoods were very common in the days when Buddhism was pre-eminent in India. On entering one of these sisterhoods, a woman became a free individual, being no longer a mere adjunct to man. As Mrs. Rhys Davids puts it, "her head shaved, her dress indistinguishable from the swathing toga of the male religieux, she was free to come and go, to wander alone in the forest shades, or climb and muse on mountain braes." The bereaved mother, the childless widow, the remorse-stricken maudlin, the rich man's wife suffering from the ennui of an idle life, the poor man's wife worn with care and drudgery, the young girl who could not brook the humiliation of being sold to the highest bidder, and the thoughtful woman who felt oppressed by the bans imposed on her intellectual development by conventional tradition—all sorts and conditions of woman found relief by joining these sisterhoods.

The Buddhist reformation being a moral reaction against a corrupt state of society, it was very necessary that the relations between the sexes should be guarded with care. Nor can it be denied that women have caused impurity to spring up even in pure beings whose sins have been stayed by deep meditation. For this reason religions have in general spoken ill of woman. The *Yogasāstra* of the Jains describes women as "the lamps that burn on the road that leads to the gate of hell." Again in the *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra* women are called "female demons on whose breasts grows two lumps of flesh, who continually change their minds, who entice men and then make a sport of them as slaves." Similar sentiments are entertained towards women by devout Christians. In a French priest's manual, the "Directorium



Sacerdotal," which is described as "A Guide for Priests in their Public and Private Life," one reads :—

"What is woman? St. Jerome gives the answer: "She is the gate by which the devil enters, the road that leads to sin; she is what the sting of the scorpion is." And in another place he says: "Woman is a fire, man the tow, and the devil the bellows." St. Maximus writes of a woman: "She makes shipwreck of men, she is a tyrant who leads them captive, a lioness who holds them fast in her embraces, a siren decked out to lead them to destruction, a malicious evil beast." And St. Anastasius the Sinaite says: "She is a viper clothed with a shining skin, a comfort to the demon, a laboratory of devils, a flaming furnace, a javelin wherewith the heart is pierced, a storm by which houses are overthrown, a guide leading to darkness, a teacher of all evil, an unbridled tongue, speaking evil of the saints." And St. Bonaventure writes: "A fair woman tricked out with her finery is a keen and sharp-edged sword in the hands of the devil."

No wonder that strict rules were laid down for the intercourse of bhikshus with women and of bhikshunis with men. But nowhere in any of the utterances of the Buddha do we find anything to show that he made any difference between man and woman. If he honoured Maudgalyāyana and Sāriputra, he also held in high esteem Khema, the wife of King Bimbisāra, and Dhammadinna, the chief among the bhikshunis that preached the Dharma. Unlike the nuns of Christendom the bikshunis were allowed as much freedom to preach the Dharma as the bhikshus. In no religion has a woman played such a prominent part as Visākha has done in Buddhism. In the *Saddharmapundarikam* the Blessed One appears on his holy mountain surrounded by multitudes of disciples, and among them are six thousand female saints. In the Buddhistic texts women are always named before men. That the Blessed One often warned men against the dangers that lurk in man's attraction for woman does not prove that the Buddha regarded woman as naturally wicked. If people are warned to avoid a precipice, does it follow that there is something intrinsically bad about a precipice? If some people cannot see a precipice without wishing to throw themselves down, it is not the precipice that is to blame, but their bad circulation, and it is wise that such people should avoid precipices. Similarly, if some men cannot see a woman without devilish thoughts in their minds, is woman to blame for it? Wickedness is a thing that pertains to the heart. If a man could only be sure that he

has no *trishna* for that which is specific in woman's organisation, he might mix with her as freely as he might like, whether he be an upāsaka or a bhikshu. Did not the Blessed One, when after his Enlightenment he visited Suddhodhana's palace, repair to the apartments of Yasodhara, the mother of Rāhula, to greet her, when she refused to come out? On that occasion the Blessed One said to Sāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, who accompanied him to the princess's chamber: "I am free; the princess, however, is not as yet free. Not having seen me for a long time, she is exceedingly sorrowful. Unless her grief be allowed its course, her heart will cleave. Should she touch the Tathāgata, the Holy One, you must not prevent her." The Buddha has not damned woman, because she is often a temptation to man to do evil, but he has only warned weak-minded men against the dangers of her unconscious influence.

Theoretically man and woman are placed by the Buddha on the same footing of equality. But in practice the latter stands much lower. Her peculiar organization places more hindrances in the way of her attaining the goal. Before one can attain the Great Peace one must have purified oneself from all lust of the flesh by a severe struggle. Only a few men enter on this struggle, but most men seem capable of entering on the path. But most women are found in experience to be too scant in wisdom, too deeply immersed in vanity, and too frail for that renunciation and mastery of the passions which are demanded of those who aspire to reach the supreme heights of Nirvāṇa. This is why the Buddhists often say that most women must be born as men, before they can enter on the Noble Path that leads to the Great Deliverance. But the Dharma itself holds both men and women as equally fitted for the task. If women can only see the light and follow the path, they will reach the goal as well as men.

Buddhism being a matter of self-control and self-culture, it regards every individual, whether man or woman, as a complete whole. Accordingly the Dharma does not concern itself with those relations between man and woman in which one sex is regarded as completing the other. But in all Buddhist countries the influence of Buddhism has been such that woman has always had fair play. She is given perfect freedom and is bound by no rigid ties. Speaking of the influence of Buddhism on the Burmese, Talboys Wheeler says: "Their wives and daughters are not shut up as prisoners in the inner apartments, but are free as air to take their pleasure on all occasions of merry-making and festivals ;

and often they assume an independent position in the family and household, and gain a livelihood for themselves or superintend the affairs of husbands or fathers. Their affections are not pent up in little hot-beds of despotism as in Hindu households, but are developed by social intercourse into free and healthy play. Courting time is an institution of the country. On any evening that a damsel is desirous of receiving company she places her lamp in her window, and puts fresh flowers in her hair, and takes her seat upon a mat. Meantime the young men of the village array themselves in their best, and pay a round of visits to the houses where they see that a lamp is burning. In this manner attachments are formed ; and instead of arbitrary unions between boys and girls, there are marriages of affection between young women and young men, in which neither parents nor priests have voice or concern." Only marriage based upon love can assure permanence, and it alone represents the highest felicity which a man and woman can attain. All opinions, customs, institutions, which favour any other view of marriage, or turn the conceptions and aspirations connected with it into any other direction, by whatever pretences they may be coloured, are, as pointed out by John Stuart Mill in his *Subjection of Woman*, relics of primitive barbarism.

The literature of the Buddhists knows nothing of child-marriage. In the *Jātakas* both the youths and maidens are grown up when they enter the married state. In the case of the female sex also the sixteenth year was apparently regarded as the time of full development and the marriageable age. The Indian people, uninfluenced by Brāhmanism, had, in the sixth century B.C., already built up for themselves, quite independently of religion, a social code regarding sexual relations. The *nagnikā* rule, according to which the *nagnikā*, i.e., a girl going naked and yet immature, is the best wife, is a Brāhmanical rule as we find from the *Grihyasūtras* and the *Smritis*. All the familiar female characters of Indian legend, Damayanti, Savitrī, Draupadī, Sakuntalā, Mālavikā, who belong to the non-Brāhman class, are full-grown girls, thoroughly conscious of their womanhood. *Svayamvara* or 'self-choice' was common only among the Kshatriyas. The founder of Buddhism and the pioneers in the Buddhist movement being Kshatriyas, they adopted the highest ideal current among the Kshatriya clans. Buddhism has therefore thrown its influence not only on the side of a strict monogamy

n marriage, in favour of chastity for both sexes before and after marriage, but also against early marriages.

In Buddhist countries no obstacle is placed in the way of female education. Though Buddhist bhikshunis are enjoined not to devote themselves to worldly wisdom, an exception is made in favour of learning to read and write. Most Burmese women, even in the villages, are able to read and write. "At an early age," writes a Burmese lady, "the girls go to their school, and learn to read and write the Buddhist scriptures in Burmese, and sometimes in mixed Burmese and Pāli, forming the ground-work of their studies. All that they learn, their ideals of right and wrong, of the nature of the body and the mind, of illness and hygiene, comes from the same source; as also do those higher teachings of faithfulness, generosity and kindness, which are perhaps the most eminent traits in the character of the Burmese women. Many learn at school the five duties of a wife:—to order her household aright, to be a hospitable housewife, to be a chaste and faithful wife, a thrifty housekeeper, and a skilful and diligent woman; and together with this instruction in ethics they receive a practical training in the ways of life at home." Females of the higher classes in Burma do not condemn industry nor affect the idleness of Hindu women. A large proportion of the retail trade in Burma is in women's hands, and women even make long trading voyages on their own account. Few men in Burma ever undertake anything of magnitude without seeking the counsel of their wives. From the statements in the *Mahavamsa* it is clear that women were from the earliest times allowed great freedom and independence in Ceylon. In Siam men of all ranks are greatly aided by their wives especially in public affairs, and in their movements women are as free as men. Even in Lamaistic Tibet women are granted complete independence both in business and personal conduct. The Russian explorer G. Ts. Tsybikoff writes: "Women enjoy perfect freedom and independence and take an active part in business affairs, often managing extensive enterprises unaided."

Among the Buddhists the ceremony of marriage is very simple. There are no complicated superstitious observances connected with it. In Ceylon, Tibet, Mongolia, Japan and in all other Buddhist countries marriage is properly a civil contract witnessed only by parents and guardians, relations and friends. Marriage in Burma is a compact on the part of husband and wife which is made before the elders of the village. When a Burmese woman marries,

she does not change her name, nor does she wear any outward sign of marriage, such as a *tāli*, or a ring, or a covering for the head. No stranger can find out either from a woman's name or by seeing her whether she is married or not, or whose wife she is. A husband has no power over his wife's property. Whatever she may bring with her, or earn for herself, or inherit subsequently, is all her own. She is absolutely the mistress not only of her own property but also of her own self. Among the Hindus a woman is always dependent. When young she is dependent on her parents, when married on her husband, and when old on her children. Among Europeans, a woman loses her own name when she marries, and becomes known only as the mistress of her husband. In Burma a woman, though married, always remains mistress of herself, a companion of her husband. No wonder that Sir T. G. Scott says that "the Burmese woman enjoys many rights which her European sister is even now clamouring for!"

The very heart and centre of Buddhist teaching is the inviolable sanctity of the individual. It is opposed to holding any person in the trammels of obedience, for maitri is the supreme law. The rule of the Buddhist *Vihāra* is a rule of freedom. Any discipline to which the bhikshu submits is self-imposed. The fruit of liberty is obedience to rule. The authority of the superior (*nāyaka*) of each *Vihāra* over his brethren depends only on their voluntary deference to his superior learning or piety. Among the several vows that a bhikshu takes on joining the order, there is no vow of obedience to any superior. How can such a religion make an unbreakable bond of marriage, as other religions have done? Hence in all Buddhist countries the ideal of marriage is that it is a partnership of love and affection, which, when these no longer exist, should be dissolved. The indissolubility of the marriage tie is not a proof of high civilization but a superstition characteristic of the lowest and most primitive savages that the earth still harbours. The followers of Romanism and Brāhmanism may be proud of the company of the Andamanese, the Veddahs of Ceylon, the Igorrotes and Italones of the Philippines and the Papuans of New Guinea, but all progressive nations have discarded the superstition of indissolubility. In Burma for proper cause shown the marriage compact can be terminated by either party. And the grounds which suffice for the dissolution of the marriage tie are much more numerous than, and different from, those which obtain in Western countries. Drunkenness, the

opium habit, difference of temperament, a nagging tongue, spend-thrift ways—all these form, if proved, sufficient grounds for the elders to grant a divorce. In spite of this freedom the proportion of divorced to married couples is very small in Burma. On the other hand the facility of divorce has made men and women very careful in their behaviour towards each other.

Some pernicious customs, such as the disfigurement of widows by shaving their heads so common among Brāhmaṇas, have been ascribed by some writers to the influence of Buddhism. This custom, it is conjectured, has had its origin in the solicitude to regulate the lives of widows after the fashion of the life of a bhikṣuṇī. Were this so, we ought to find the custom in vogue among those peoples on whom the influence of Buddhism has been very great. Yet in Burma where Buddhism exists in its pristine vigour and bhikṣuṇīs are found even to this day no widow is compelled to shave her head. In no Buddhist country do we find the compulsory disfigurement of widows. Even in India whenever the influence of Buddhism survives to this day, as among the Tēngalai Vaiṣṇavite Brāhmaṇas, the Sātānees of South India, and the followers of Chaitanya in Bengal, who admit women to the order of *Gosāyins*, widows are not shaved. We must therefore look for the source of this abhorrent practice in other quarters. Like the customs of feeding the dead (*śrāddha*) and of secluding women at the menstrual periods, the custom of shaving the heads of widows owes its origin to a belief in ghosts. Among all savage and semi-savage races the belief is that the ghosts of the dead hang about places and persons to whom they may be attached; they therefore perform magical rites and ceremonies with a view to drive the ghosts away from their haunts. The ghost of a dead person is supposed to attach itself to the body of his widow, especially by means of the hair. Hence the removal of the hair from the head of a widow has come to be regarded as the best means of making the ghost of her dead husband quit her body. As a matter of fact even at the present day when an Indian magician exorcizes the devil by incantations from an obsessed person, he removes at the last stage a tuft of hair from the head of the person possessed.

A charge usually brought against the Dharma is that its teachings are destructive of the family life, as those that accept its teachings in all their fulness do not marry, or if they are already married, betake themselves to a homeless life, leaving their parents, wives and children. This is no new accusation.

The Buddhist books tell us that the people of Rājagriha reviled the bhikshus for inducing young nobles to leave their homes and thus causing the extinction of many families. When this reviling was reported to the Blessed One, he said : “ If people revile you, O bhikshus, say that it is by preaching the truth that Tathāgatas lead men. Self-control, righteousness and a clean heart are the injunctions of our Master.” Self-control, righteousness and a clean heart cannot be acquired except by the renunciation of all sensual pleasure and the practice of perfect chastity. If voluntary chastity brings about the destruction of the family life, the loss is none too great for the true holiness and perfection thereby achieved. Not only Buddhism but all other religions also have laid greater or less stress on celibacy. Even modern civilization does not look down upon celibacy. According to modern ideas the union between man and woman is too much a matter of sentiment to be regarded as a civic duty. Enlightened opinion does not enjoin marriage as a duty incumbent upon all. But it might be asked, what would become of the human race if all abstained from the nuptial bed, which is the only means of propagating the species ? Would that they did so with a pure mind and a clean conscience, with zeal and unselfishness so that they could soon become citizens of the kingdom of righteousness and hasten the end of Māra’s dominion ! Would not such extinction of mankind be nobler than destruction by war and tyranny, poverty and famine, plague and pestilence, earthquake and tidal wave ? As Schiller says :

“ Das Leben ist der Güter Höchstes nicht.”  
(Mere living is not the highest good.)

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FOUR GREAT TRUTHS

THE main teachings of the Dharma have been summarised by the Blessed One in four propositions, which are generally known as the Four Great Truths or affirmations\* (*chatvāri ārya-satyāni*). They contain in a nutshell the philosophy and the morality of Buddhism. They are as follows :

The first great truth is that misery, that is to say, pain and suffering (*dukkham*), is associated with all stages and conditions of conscious life. Birth is suffering ; age is suffering ; illness is suffering ; death is suffering. Painful it is not to obtain what we desire. Painful again it is to be joined with that which we do not like. More painful still is the separation from that which we love.

The second great truth is that the cause of misery (*dukkha samudayo*) is *trishṇa*, the grasping desire to live for selfish enjoyment. Sensations (*vedana*), begotten by the surrounding world, create the illusion of a separate self. This illusory self manifests its activity in a cleaving to things for selfish enjoyment which entangles man in pain and suffering. Pleasure is the deceitful siren which lures man to pain.

The third great truth is that emancipation from misery (*dukkha nirodho*) is possible by abandoning selfish cravings (*upādānas*). When all selfish cravings are destroyed, there is necessarily an end of suffering. All selfish craving arises from want, and so long as it is not satisfied, it leads to pain. Even when it is satisfied, this satisfaction is not lasting, for this very satisfaction gives rise to new needs and therefore to new sorrows. The entire essence of man seems to be an unquenchable thirst for a thousand wants. How else could he get rid of sorrow but by abandoning this thirst ?

The fourth great truth is that the Noble Eightfold Path (*ārya ashtānga mārgam*) is the means by which man can get rid of all selfish cravings and attain perfect freedom from suffering. He who has fathomed the Dharma will necessarily walk in the right path, and to him salvation is assured.

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\* In the statement of these Four Great Truths, the language of Indian medical science has been employed.



These four great truths form what may be called the articles of the Buddhist creed. But they are not put forward as dogmas which have to be accepted without inquiry. Dogmatism which prohibits investigation would, instead of leading to the Buddhist *summum bonum*, dissuade the aspirant from his duty and therefore from the Noble Path. Nowhere, has the Buddha said : " Avoid inquiry, for it will lead you where there is no light, no peace, no hope ; it will lead you into the deep pit, where the sun and moon and stars and beauteous heavens are not, but chilliness and barrenness and perpetual desolations."\* On the other hand, it is clearly laid down that nothing can be the teaching of the Buddha which is not consistent with reason, which cannot be subjected to the dry light of investigation. The idea of a religious authority is incompatible with the Dharma, for it teaches that every man is his own architect and his own saviour. It is a childish idea to suppose that an authority, external to man, can have a religious value. An authority can only exist for one only in proportion as one recognises it as such either unconsciously and without understanding the motives that prompt him, or by virtue of an act of conscious reasoning. After all it is the adhesion of one's mind and will that can give weight to any authority. A Buddhist bhikshu, unlike the Christian monk, lays no claim to any authority, nor does he avow obedience to any authority. The aim set by the Blessed One before the aspirant being enlightenment, the belief in authority and dogma will be of no avail. The creed of Buddhism is, therefore, like the creed of every genuine science, a register of results.

No one can question the fact that misery is associated with conscious life. We live in a world which is full of evil and misery. Were there no misery, there would be no need for the struggle for existence which is always and everywhere in evidence.

" The lizard feeds on ant, and snake on him,  
And kite on both; and the fish-hawk doth rob.  
The fish-tiger of that which it hath siezed;  
The shrike chases the bulbul, which hunts down  
The jewelled butterflies; till everywhere  
Each slays a slayer, and in turn is slain,  
Life living upon death. So the fair show  
Veils one vast, savage, grim conspiracy  
Of mutual murder from the worm to man,  
Who himself kills his fellow."

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\* Cardinal Newman.

Hunger and fear are the boon companions of the great majority of human beings, not to speak of the animals in the same condition. Individual experience and history prove that optimism is the silliest nonsense that has been invented to console mankind. Even the most hardened optimist, if he would but open his eyes well, would be horrified to see the immensity of misery and suffering which surrounds man. Let him walk through hospitals, lazarettos, surgical rooms, through penitentiaries, dungeons, and slave kennels, through places of torture and execution, through battlefields, and then let him ask himself if this is the best of all possible words. He will no longer find it easy to doubt that

“ Life from birth to death  
Means—either looking back on harm escaped,  
Or looking forward to that harm’s return  
With tenfold power of harming ? ”

Schopenhauer has vividly described the misery of life as follows :

“ Having awakened to life from the night of unconsciousness the will finds itself as an individual in an infinite and endless world among innumerable individuals, all striving, suffering, erring ; and as though passing through a frightful unpleasant dream, it hurries back to the old unconsciousness. Until then, however, its wishes are unlimited, its claims inexhaustible, and every satisfied desire begets a new one. No gratification possible in the world could allay its cravings, put a final end to its longings, and fill the bottomless abyss of its heart. Consider, too, what satisfactions of every kind man generally receives : they are usually nothing more than the meagre preservation of this existence itself, daily gained by ceaseless toil and incessant care, in struggle against want, with death for ever in the van. Everything in life indicates that earthly happiness is destined to be foiled or to be avowed as a delusion. The causes of this lie deep in the nature of things. Accordingly the life of most of us proves sad and short. The comparatively happy are usually only apparently so, or are, like long-lived persons, rare exceptions—left as a decoy for the rest.

“ Life proves a continual deception in great as well as small matters. If it makes a promise, it does not fulfil it, unless to show that the coveted object was little desirable. Thus sometimes hope, sometimes the fulfilment of hope, deceives us. If it gives, it is but to take away. The fascination of distance presents a paradise, like an optical illusion when we have allowed ourselves

to be allured thither. Happiness accordingly lies always in the future or in the past ; and the present is to be compared to a small dark cloud which the wind drives over a sunny plain. Before it and behind it all is bright, it alone casts a shadow. The present therefore is never satisfactory ; the future uncertain ; the past irrecoverable. Life with its hourly, daily, weekly, and yearly, small, great and greater misfortunes, with its frustrated hopes and mishaps baffling all calculation, bears so plainly the impress of something we should become disgusted with that it is difficult to understand how any one could have mistaken this and been convinced that life was to be thankfully enjoyed and man destined to be happy. On the other hand, the eternal delusion and disappointment as well as the constitution of life throughout seem as though they were intended and adapted to arouse the conviction that nothing whatever is worthy of our striving, driving and wrestling,—that all goods are nought, the world bankrupt throughout and life a business that does not meet expenses,—so that our will may turn away from it.

“ The manner in which this vanity of all objects of the will reveals itself, is, in the first place, time. Time is the form by means of which the vanity of things appears as transitoriness, since through time all our enjoyments and pleasures come to nought ; and we afterwards ask in amazement what has become of them ? Accordingly our life is like a payment which we receive in copper pence, and which at last we must receipt. The pence are the days, death the receipt. For, at last, time proclaims the sentence of nature’s judgment upon the worth of all beings by destroying them.

And justly so ; for all things from the void  
Called forth, deserve to be destroyed.  
T’were better, there were nought created.—*Goethe*.

“ Age and death, to which every life necessarily hurries, are the sentence of condemnation upon the will to live, passed by nature herself, which declares that this will is a struggling, that must defeat itself. “ What thou hast willed,” it says, ‘ ends thus ; will something better.’

“ The lessons which each one learns from his life consist, on the whole, in this, that the objects of his wishes constantly delude, shake and fall ; consequently they bring more torment than pleasure, until at length even the whole ground upon which they all stand gives way, inasmuch as his life itself is annihilated.

Thus he receives the last confirmation that all his striving and willing were a blunder and an error.

“Then old age and experience, hand in hand,  
Lead him to death, and make him comprehend  
After a search so painful and so long  
That all his life he has been in the wrong.”

“Whatever may be said to the contrary, the happiest moment of the happiest mortal is still the moment he falls asleep, as the unhappiest moment of the unhappiest mortal the moment he awakens.”\*

Despite the gruesome misery of life man does not grow desperate. True to his nature as a living being he is continually striving after self-preservation. With all his labour in civilisation man strives for nothing else than his salvation, his deliverance from sorrow and suffering, from inexorable limitation, ruthless strife, and inevitable death. What man speaks of as pleasure and happiness is nothing else than deliverance from pain, from the ills of frailty, relativity and imperfection. We know nothing positive about pleasure. Some desire or want is the condition that precedes every pleasure. With the satisfaction of the want, the wish and, therefore, the pleasure, cease. All that is given to us directly is merely the want, *i.e.*, the pain. Even when all other wants have been satisfied, there is one desire which man cannot attain. Man's instinctive impulse towards self-preservation has created in him a desire for changeless and deathless life, a desire to be free from old age and death. How can this desire be attained? How can man obtain deliverance from the inevitable doom of death? How is it possible to maintain a continuity in spite of the perpetual change going on in the great struggle of existence? This is everywhere the problem of religion. Everywhere religion is the instinct of self-preservation manifesting itself in the form of hope and aspiration. Wherever man meets with circumstances which cannot be made serviceable to him, but to which on the contrary he is obliged to suit himself and his life-aims, there arises religion. Religion, in the true sense of the word, has nothing to do with the origin or purpose of the world. As Prof. Leuba says, “not god, but life, more life, a larger, more satisfying life is, in the last analysis, the end of religion.” With true insight and wisdom has the Buddha declared: “Have I promised to reveal to you secrets and mysteries? I have, on the contrary, promised to make

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\* The World as Will and Idea, Vol. II, Ch. 46.

known to you suffering, the cause of suffering, and the way of escape from suffering. As the vast ocean is impregnated with one taste, the taste of salt, so also my disciples, this Dharma, this teaching, is impregnated with one taste, the taste of deliverance."

The significance of religious ideas does not consist in making existence comprehensible. Whether the world is eternal or not, whether the world is infinite or not, whether the soul is the same as the body, or distinct from it—these are indeterminate questions (*avyākātāni*), on which people may wrangle and violently discuss, without profit. Any attempt to solve these questions will lead to the same result as the attempt of the blind men in the story who tried to determine the character of an elephant by each touching a different part of it. The discussion of such questions is useless speculation. "The jungle, the desert, the puppet show, the writhing, the entanglement, of speculation—are accompanied by sorrow, by wrangling, by resentment, by the fever of excitement; they conduce neither to detachment of heart, nor freedom from lusts, nor to tranquillity, nor to peace, nor to wisdom, nor to the insight of the higher stages of the Path, nor to Arahatsip."

In his attempts to find a perfect life, a life free from misery and death, man has through ignorance fallen a victim to the creations of his own fancy. To satisfy his longing for a deathless life he invented immortal souls which could survive the death of the body. Judging the unknown, upon which he found himself hopelessly dependent for the realisation of his desires, in the light of what was best known to him, that is to say, of what he fancied about his own nature, he peopled the universe with gods, souls like himself but more mighty and capable of doing him good or harm. To win the favour of the gods or avert their wrath, man invented all kinds of prayers, charms, magical formulæ, and bloody sacrifices. Especially the last have played such a prominent part in religion that many writers on anthropology have mistaken it for 'the fundamental doctrine of religion.' Even the very gods have been supposed to become incarnate human beings and offer themselves in sacrifice for the salvation of mankind.\* But all these are not essential to religion and the Buddha saw that clearly. He put an end to all kinds of sacrifices, rejected the use of charms and magical formulæ, and pointed out the ineptitude

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\* "A curious relic of primitive superstition and cruelty remained firmly imbedded in Orphism—a doctrine irrational and unintelligible, and for that very reason wrapped in the deepest and most sacred mystery: a belief in the sacrifice of Dionysos himself, and the purification of man by his blood."

of gods to save mankind. He taught that misery and suffering were not the result of the wrath of gods, but that they were the consequences of man's ignorance of his own nature and his surroundings. Nor is death the result of sin. Life and death are inseparable. All life is change; and what is change but the death of the present? Man shudders at and fears death, and yet death and life are not different. Just as all energy tends towards dissipation, so does all life tend towards death. All life is progressive death. The great Chinese philosopher, Licius, pointing to a heap of mouldering human bones, rightly remarked to his scholars: "These and I alone have the knowledge that we neither live nor are dead." Similarly just before his death the Buddha said: "Everything that lives, whatever it be, is subject to the law of destruction; the law of things 'combined' is to 'separate.'"

The world process did not come into existence all perfected. It started with blind potentialities; it began at a point where there was neither a world nor a self but only inarticulate, indistinct, blurred possibilities of both. When self-conscious man made his appearance on the scene, there was already an outcrop of inherited tendencies. That man originated from an animal is no longer doubted. All known facts demonstrate that man, looked at from a purely zoological standpoint, is nothing more than a simian 'monster,' a sort of arrested development in an anthropomorphic ape of an anterior epoch. He is only a prodigy child of an anthropoid born with a brain and intelligence more developed than those of his parents.\* As a result of this origin there have survived in man natural impulses which show themselves according to their own nature in qualities fitted for a non-moral life. But his development gave rise to the necessity of associating with his fellows into families, and this has led to the growth of social life, a life of morality. What is called the feeling of sinfulness is nothing else than the consciousness that the actions suited to an individual life are not suited to the requirements of a social or moral life, a consciousness which varies in proportion to the development of social claims and the moral sense.

Evolution takes place through all forms, from the mineral through plants and all kinds of animal forms, until perfection is reached in the Buddha. "All trees and grass, these shall also

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\* Elie Metchnikoff : *Etudes sur la nature humaine.*

become Lord Buddha" says a Japanese proverb. All beings are what they are by their previous and present *karma*. The germ of enlightenment (*nirvāṇadhātu*) first manifests itself as sentient reflex activity, but gradually develops through the path of conscious concurrence into self-conscious rational reaction. In the initial stage of sentient reflex activity the living being acts under the influence of some inherent impulse which enables it to accomplish some good in a mechanical way. This reflex activity excludes all freedom and evil propensities; the living being is devoid of all notion of good or evil, and it lives, so to speak, in unconscious communion with the whole of nature. In the middle stage of conscious concurrence the living being begins a life of individuality, differentiating itself more and more, as it progresses, from other beings and disputing with them for as large a share as possible of enjoyment and satisfaction. Though it has lost the primitive simplicity which, in the initial stage, enabled it to do some good unconsciously, yet it has acquired freedom. It is now constantly bent on evil, but when it does evil it knows not that it does evil.

During the final stage of self-conscious rational reaction the living being enters on the struggle for life, engages in the strife for pleasure and comfort, and sacrifices as many beings as it can for the satisfaction of its own egoistic appetites, but when it does evil there arises within itself a feeling of remorse. Conscious intelligence, though a child of the world-process, feels it necessary to control the process by which it has been originated. Reason and love claim the right to control the appetites and passions. Gradually the notion of duty takes root in the heart of man, and it becomes a check to the free play of his passions. As he makes constant efforts to arrest his passions, his moral sense, the keen perception for improvement, becomes more and more active. He finds it necessary to wipe off the effects of his bad tendencies, and he resolves to suppress them in future. He thus gets a glimpse of the Noble Path that leads to perfection. The more intense this self-conscious reaction in a man, the more does he feel a necessity to return to a stage similar to that of reflex activity, though acting in the full consciousness of freedom. He can henceforth do nothing else than good, but, instead of doing it in an involuntary mechanical way like the beings of the initial stage, he does it voluntarily with a view to accumulate merit. He does good to others, not in order that they may do good to him, but because by doing so, he does good to himself. How can one be good to

others, if he is not good to himself? The deliberate accomplishment of good, even at the sacrifice of the demands of reflex activity and primal instinct, opens out to him the Noble Path of enlightenment. He now perceives under what conditions it would be possible to traverse the path. By means of the efforts he makes to produce a moral transformation in himself, he sees with certainty what further steps have necessarily to be taken to reach the goal. His final emancipation, his salvation from misery and death, is now assured. It is merely a question of time, for he is in possession of the means of hastening his emancipation. He suppresses more and more his egoistic inclinations and works for the good of all beings. When he has obtained complete self-possession and mastery of mind and has trained himself to feel his oneness with all that lives, with the generations past and the generations to come, not only with his fellow-beings, but with the whole world, with every creature that walks the earth, his progress is completed, and he has reached the blissful haven where there is no more struggle, no more pain, but unutterable peace. By breaking the chains which bind him to the world of individuality and growing to be co-extensive with all life, he secures for himself a life everlasting, where there is no more the taste of death.

“ 'Tis self whereby we suffer. 'Tis greed  
To grasp, the hunger to assimilate  
All that earth holds of fair and delicate,  
The best to blend with beauteous lives, to feed  
And take our fill of loveliness, which breed  
This anguish of the soul intemperate.  
'Tis self that turns to harm and poisonous hate  
The calm clear life of love that Arhats lead.  
Oh ! that't were possible this self to burn  
In the pure flame of joy contemplative !  
Then might we love all loveliness, nor yearn  
With tyrannous longings ; undisturbed might live  
Greeting the summer's and the spring's return  
Nor waiting that their bloom is fugitive.”



## CHAPTER VII

### BUDDHISM AND ASCETICISM

THE religion of Ancient India was a form of natural religion in which sacrifice played an important part. In the beginning, probably sacrifices were offered with a view to avert the wrath of the gods whom men feared. But in later times sacrifice was regarded as a means of communication between men and gods. As fire is both celestial and terrestrial, Agni, the god of fire, which is kindled in every sacrifice, was supposed to act as the middleman between men and gods and bear the oblation to the gods. If sacrifice could be a means of communicating with the gods, it would not be impossible for man to enter into economic relations with them. If man could offer the gods something that would please them, it should also be possible for the gods to give man in return what he might desire. Thus in due course sacrifice developed into a kind of bartering with the gods. “*Dehi me dadami te*—I give in order that you may give” is the burden of almost every Vedic hymn, and is the explicit or implied reason of every Vedic sacrifice. From the conception of sacrifice as a kind of barter easily arose the idea that sacrifices could not only buy the gods, but that the gods could, even against their will, be coerced by means of sacrifices to do what man desired. As Prof. Sylvain Levi\* has pointed out, morality finds no place in this system. Sacrifice which regulates the relation of man to the divinities, is a mechanical act, operating by its own spontaneous energy, and the magic art of the priest brings out what is hidden in the bosom of nature. The gods are conquered and subjected by the same power that has given them their greatness. Whether the gods like or not, the sacrificer is elevated to the celestial sphere and assured there a definite place for the future.

Naturally the sacrificial arts rose in the estimation of the people, and eventually those that possessed the knowledge of the sacrificial arts succeeded in dominating the people of India. “*Devādhīnam jagat sarvaṃ*,” says a well-known Sanskrit verse, “*mantrādhīnam tadaivatam ; tanmantrā brāhmaṇādhīnam, brāhmaṇā mamadevatā*.”

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\* La doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brāhmanas.

The universe is subject to the gods, and the gods are subject to the sacrificial *mantras*. But the *mantras* themselves are in the hands of the Brāhmaṇas. Hence the Brāhmaṇas are the real gods, though they live on this earth. The Brāhmaṇas could make him a deity that was not a deity, and they could divest one that was a deity of his status as such. Thus, like the pontifices in Ancient Rome, the Brāhmaṇas became powerful and mighty in India.

Of all sacrifices the greatest is that in which a human being is offered to the gods. There can be no doubt that human sacrifices were once common in India. "Despite protestant legends, despite formal disclaimers," says Prof. E. W. Hopkins, "human sacrifices existed long after the period of the Rig Veda, where it is alluded to; a period when even old men were exposed to die." The ritual manuals and Brāhmanic texts prove that the *anādha-purusha* is not a fiction and that a real victim was offered. A human sacrifice was very expensive, for ordinarily it cost 'one thousand cattle' to buy a man to be sacrificed. It was indeed meritorious for one to put himself to this heavy expense, and offer a human victim to the gods, but it would be more meritorious for the very individual to whose benefit accrued the sacrifice to immolate himself. Thus was evolved the theory and practice of self-mortification as a means of coercing the gods to bestow gifts on man. The Hindu books are full of legendary accounts of the wonderful powers attained through self-mortification and austere penance. By self-mortification Rāvaṇa became invulnerable against gods and demons. By austere fervour Nahusha obtained the undisputed sovereignty of the three worlds. Visvāmitra, who was born a Kshatriya, raised himself by intense austerities to the Brāhmaṇ caste. In order to obtain elevation to the position of a Brāhmaṇa, Matanga, a Chandāla, went through such a course of austerities as alarmed the gods. Indra persistently refused such an impossible request. Nothing daunted Matanga balanced himself on his great toe till he was reduced to mere skin and bone, and was on the point of falling. Indra even came down to support him, but inexorably refused his request, and when further importuned, he granted him the power of moving about like a bird, and changing his shape at will, and of being honoured and renowned. Such was the deep belief of the people of Ancient India in the efficacy of asceticism and self-mortification.

At the time of the rise of Buddhism the belief in the efficacy of self-mortification would appear to have reached its acme.

Asceticism was regarded as identical with religiousness. In both Brāhmanism and Jainism, which were in a flourishing condition in the time of Sākyamuni, great stress was laid on asceticism. As Prof. Jacobi puts it, the Jainas seem to take a sort of pride in outdoing their Brāhmanic rivals, as regards rigorous conduct, mistaking nastiness and filthiness for the highest pitch of ascetic virtue. The Jain religion teaches that twelve years of asceticism of the severest type are necessary to salvation. The ideal life for a Jaina monk is described in the *Āchārāṅga sūtra* as follows : “ Giving up his robe, the Venerable One was a naked, world relinquishing, houseless sage. When spoken to or saluted, he gave no answer. For more than a couple of years he led a religious life, without using cold water ; he realized singleness, guarded his body, had got intuition and was calm. For thirteen years he meditated day and night and was undisturbed in spirit. Practising the sinless abstinence from killing, he did no injurious acts ; he consumed nothing that had been prepared for him ; he consumed clean food. Always on his guard, he bore the pains caused by grass, cold, fire, flies, gnats, undisturbed. Whether wounded or unwounded, he desired not medical treatment. Medicines, anointing of the body and bathing, cleansing of the teeth, did not behove him after he had learned the path of deliverance. Sometimes the Venerable One did not drink for half a month or a month. Sometimes he ate only the sixth meal, or the eighth, or the twelfth. Without ceasing in his reflections the Venerable One wandered about, and killing no creatures he begged for his food : moist or dry or cold food, old beans, old pap, or bad grain—whether he did or did not get such food, he was rich in self-control.” Logically self-mortification should lead to suicide. And in Jainism, while all other kinds of killing are strictly forbidden, suicide is highly praised. The proper method of committing suicide is to retire, after practising mendicancy and the approved austerities for twelve years, to a secluded spot, and having cleared it of all living creatures, starve one’s self to death. “ This method,” says the *Āchārāṅga sūtra*, “ has been adopted by many who were free from delusion. It is good, wholesome, proper, beatifying, meritorious.” Consistently with its asceticism Jainism abhors and despises womanhood. In the popular romances of the Jains the hero is the pious young man who, when going to his own wedding feast to be united to his bride, is smitten with remorse and pity for the numerous living beings that might be killed during the wedding festival, and so

gives away his jewels in charity, plucks out his hair to its roots, and joins the order of ascetics. These austerities practised by the Jain monks form but a poor illustration of the extent to which self-torture and self-mortification had been pushed in the Buddha's time.

Gautama Siddārtha too fell into the trap of asceticism, but fortunately for the world he escaped from it. As was the fashion of his day Siddārtha also left his home and family, and retired to the forest to seek after truth. He placed himself under the guidance of the wisest hermits of his day. He studied all their teachings and endeavoured to follow their example. He tried to purify himself by ceremonies and sacrifices, by starvation and austerities, by nakedness and self-torture. He has himself described how for six years in the jungle of Uruvilva he patiently tortured himself and suppressed all the wants of nature. He led the most rigorous ascetic life. He ate each day a single grain of rice. His body became emaciated and shrunken, so much that his arms and legs looked like withered reeds, his buttocks resembled the hump of a camel, and his ribs projected like the rafters of a house. The fame of his austerities spread in the neighbourhood, and crowds came to see him. He pushed his fast even to such an extreme that at last he fell into a swoon from sheer starvation and exhaustion. And when he came to himself, he found that no revelation had come to him in his senselessness. He once more began to eat and drink so that he recovered his strength. He pondered over the fruits of his self-mortification and found out that this was not the path to the wisdom he sought. Just as he realized in his palace that the way to salvation does not lie in the indulgence of worldly pleasures, so did he in the forest realise that fasts and penances do not advance people in their search for deliverance from misery, that *mens sana in corpore sano* must be the true aim. Without bodily vigour the condition of an Arahat is difficult to attain. "He who has discerned the uselessness of all *tapas* whatsoever—bearing along with it, as it does all that is useless even as punting pole and steering pole may bring along a water-snake—he, practising the path to *bodhi*—moral conduct (*śīla*) meditation (*dhyāna*) and insight (*pragnā*)—will win the purity supreme."

Seek Health, the Supreme Good ; be virtuous ;  
Conform to Truth, and burst Attachment's bonds.

In his sermon to the five bhikshus in the Deer Park at Benares the Tathāgata explained the Middle Path, the true means of attaining salvation, thus :

“Neither abstinence from fish or flesh, nor going naked, nor shaving the head, nor wearing matted hair, nor dressing in a rough garment, nor covering oneself with dirt, nor sacrificing to Agni, will cleanse a man whose mind is full of delusion.

“Neither reading the Vedas, nor sacrificing to the gods, nor fasting often, nor lying on the ground, nor keeping hard and strict vigils, nor repeating prayers will cleanse a man who is in error.

“Neither bestowing gifts on priests, nor self-mortification nor the performance of penances, nor the observance of rites can purify the man who has not overcome his passions.

“It is not the eating of flesh that constitutes uncleanness, but anger, drunkenness, obstinacy, bigotry, deception, envy, self-praise, disparagement of others, superciliousness and evil intentions—these cause uncleanness.

“Let me teach you, O bhikshus, the Middle Path, which keeps aloof from both extremes. By suffering the emaciated devotee produces confusion and sickly thoughts in his mind. Mortification is not conducive even to worldly knowledge ; how much less to a triumph over the senses !

“He who fills his lamp with water will not dispel the darkness, and he who tries to light a fire with rotten wood will fail.

“Mortifications are painful, vain and profitless. And how can any one be free from self by leading a wretched life, if he does not succeed in quenching the fires of lust ?

“All mortification is vain so long as selfishness leads to lust after pleasures in this world or in another world. But he in whom egotism has become extinct is free from lust ; he will desire neither worldly nor heavenly pleasures, and the satisfaction of his natural wants will not defile him. He may eat and drink to satisfy the needs of life.

“On the other hand, sensuality of every kind is enervating. The sensual man is a slave of his passions, and pleasure seeking is vulgar and degrading.

“But to satisfy the necessities of life is not evil. To shelter the body from the weather, to cover it decently and comfortably, to protect it against the numerous external causes of pain, to save it as far as possible from fatigue, to eliminate sensations that are disagreeable, in short, to keep the body in good health,

is a duty, for otherwise we shall not be able to trim the lamp of wisdom and keep our minds strong and clear.

"This is the Middle Path, O bhikshus, that keeps aloof from both extremes."

To a pupil of Parasariya, a great Brahmin ascetic, the Buddha said : "Keep the *çila* and the precepts and acquire the range of moral conduct . . . , see that the gates of sense are well-guarded, that no influx of impression bears thee off thy feet, be moderate in diet, keep vigils, be mindful and heedful, cultivate self-collectedness in solitude purging the heart of five hindrances and practising the meditation raptures." On one occasion some disciples asked the Master whether there was any virtue in the austerities of those heretics who made beds on thorns and suffered the fivefold forms of fire penance, the Master answered : "There is no virtue nor any special merit in it. When it is examined and tasted, it is like a path over a dung hill." No wonder that among their rivals the Buddhists had the reputation of being 'preachers of ease' (*sāta-vādin*), who favoured the 'way of comfort' (*pushtimārga*).

Starting as it does from the first great truth that sorrow and suffering are concomitants of every conceivable form of egoism, the Dharma does not consign man to the sensualist's (*chārvāka*) "let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die." The Dharma spurns not only asceticism, but also all luxury. The aim of the Dharma is enlightenment and peace and not pleasure. Hence no mode of living, which is merely intended to increase pleasure without materially promoting health or efficiency, can be rational. On this ground all luxury, the mere increase of an individual's pleasure by superfluous consumption, is condemned. It cannot be doubted that luxury has in the long run a baneful effect on one's health. Who does not know the excesses in sensual indulgence committed by persons of wealth and leisure and the difficulty of avoiding them even by care and self-control? Luxurious habits make men disinclined for labour and incapable of sustained exertion and patient endurance, which are the powers needed for most kinds of strenuous work. Even if the prospect of luxury may act in some cases as an incentive to work, still from an ethical point of view, it would seem base that one should not be able to do his duty without bribing himself by a larger share of consumable wealth than falls to the common lot. A man who lives in luxury consumes what, even from a purely utilitarian point of view, could have produced more happiness if it had been left to be consumed by others. Nobody can eat

his cake and also have it. It is an absurd fallacy to suppose that a man by living luxuriously provides work and therefore bread for the many. A man, properly speaking, benefits others by rendering service to them, and not by requiring them to render service to him. Luxury appears to receive some support from the Spencerian formula of "passage from indefinite homogeneity to definite heterogeneity," but really it finds no basis in the general law of evolution. Rather it has its origin in a conception of life which is opposed to the teachings of science. As Elie Metchnikoff says in his *Etudes sur la nature humaine*, "when the meaning and aim of life has become more precise, it will be found that true welfare does not consist in luxury, which is opposed to the normal cycle of human life."

Wealth is often supposed to procure ease of body and peace of mind, and give time for ideal ends and exercise for ideal energies. But it actually does so in very rare cases. As Adam Smith has rightly remarked in his *Theory of Morals*, "wealth and greatness are mere trinkets of frivolous utility no more adapted for procuring ease of body or tranquillity of mind than the tweezer-cases of the lover of toys; and, like them too, more troublesome to the person who carries them about with him than all the advantages they can afford him are commodious. . . . In ease of body and peace of mind all the different ranks of life are nearly upon a level, and the beggar who suns himself by the side of the highway, possesses the security which kings are fighting for." But, as the *Jātakamāla* says, wealth has one virtue. It can be given away by him who aims at the welfare of his fellows. But very few desire wealth for such a noble purpose. Most covet large incomes for fine garments, handsome apartments, theatres, public houses, horses and coaches, all for making a show of their money and never for increasing the sum of social benefits. The desire of gaining wealth and the fear of losing it generally breed cowardice and propagate corruption. In many circumstances the man in pursuit of wealth is a slave, whilst a man for whom poverty has no terrors is free. Personal indifference to poverty gives the seeker after truth strength to devote himself to a noble but unpopular cause, and thus bear witness to the higher life. Small wonder, therefore, that the Buddhist bhikshu takes the vow of poverty!

It is not that the vow of poverty or any other vow is absolutely necessary for attaining the Supreme Good. Laymen, living at

home and enjoying the pleasures of sense, can realise in themselves the Peace of Nirvāṇa. But on account of the virtues really inherent in the vows, those aspiring for Buddhahood long for them and hold them dear. As Nagasena says in *Milindaprasna*, the keeping of the vows\* implies a mode of livelihood without evil, it has a blissful calm as its fruit, it avoids blame, it works no harm to others, it is free from danger, it brings no trouble on others, it is certain to bring with it growth in goodness, it wastes not away, it works the satisfaction of desires and the taming of all beings, it is good for self-control, it makes one self-dependent, it emancipates him from all *trishna*, it leads to the destruction of lust, malice and indolence, it pulls down pride, cuts off evil thoughts, removes doubts, suppresses sloth, puts away discontent. The life of those who thoroughly carry out the vows is pure; well-guarded are they in deed and word; altogether pure are they in manners and in mind; their zeal flags not; all their fears are allayed; all delusions about the permanence of their individuality have been put away; anger has died away while their hearts have become filled with love for all beings (*maitri*); they are full of watchfulness; they are in earnest always; they loathe to do ill; they dwell in pleasant spots; they are temperate in eating; and they are honoured of all men. Nor can one become worthy of the advantages inherent in the vows, unless he is full of faith in the realization of his ideal, ashamed to do wrong, full of courage, void of hypocrisy, master of himself, not greedy, desirous to learn, glad to undertake difficult tasks, not easily offended and of a loving heart. Like the broad earth is the character resulting from the keeping of the vows to serve as a basis to those who desire to be pure and attain Nirvāṇa.

The attainment of Bodhi is much more than plain-living and high-thinking. It implies perfect sanity of life and perfect freedom from lust, the realization of the highest capacities by the sacrifice of the lower. Hence it involves the unusual sacrifice implied by a celibate life. The attainment of Nirvāṇa is an achievement so rare and grand that celibacy does not seem too great a sacrifice. Even in married life it may not be impossible to accomplish a good deal in the direction of the perfect life. Still evolution would seem to indicate a necessary connection

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\* The thirteen *dhutāṅgas* are not general rules, binding on all members of the Sangha, but are supplementary or extra vows conducive, but subsidiary to, the ethical self-culture of the Arahats.



tween celibacy and the higher life. Evolution points to a natural antagonism between individual perfection and race multiplication. While in the lower stages of animal life the race everything and the individual nothing, in the higher types the productive function becomes subordinated, and the individual is in importance. In the bacillus or the fish we see a prodigal fecundity, but the major portion of mankind has arrived at the age of 'one at a birth.' The highest stage would, therefore, be that in which the individual is all to himself, concerned no longer with the propagation of the race but only with the full and free expansion of himself. Hence the perfect individuality and the highest altruism demanded of the seeker after *bodhi* would seem to be impossible except at the cost of fitness for the multiplication of the species.

It is a charge frequently brought against the Buddhist bhikshu that he is a drone dependant on others for support. But this is an accusation not warranted by facts. No doubt there are black sheep in every fold. But Buddhism teaches that indolence is a lament and that strenuousness is the path of immortality. The Buddha never taught the doctrine of non-action. To the *Upanishads* general-in-chief, Simha, the Blessed One clearly pointed out that what he taught was the not doing of anything unrighteous either by word or by thought or by deed, and the doing of everything righteous by word, thought and deed. "O monks," says the Blessed One in the *Itivuttaka*, "be not afraid of good works : such is the name for happiness, for what is wished, desired, dear and delightful,—namely, good works." Often and often has the Buddha admonished his disciples against sloth and indolence. He sternly refused admission to slothful men into the Buddhist order. "For a weak and slothful man there is in this religion no high fruition, no sainthood ; they only who make a strenuous effort accomplish this." An anecdote, narrated in the *Commentary on the Dhammapadam*, is of interest in this connection. There was once a man who had no brothers, but only one little son, who was much beloved by both his parents. They sent him to school and fondly hoped that he would be an honour to their house. But, alas ! he was careless and negligent and learned nothing. His parents took him home, hoping he would prove useful in household management. But he was idle and dirty in his ways, and was altogether a source of sorrow to them. He was consequently rebuked by all his neighbours and became an object of contempt

among his friends and almost hateful to his parents. Deeply affected by this, he sought some comfort in religious exercises, but found no help in all his penances and prayers to the gods. At last, hearing of the Benign One, he came to him and begged his help. To whom the Master replied: "If you should find comfort in my society, the first thing for you to learn is purity of conduct. Go back, therefore, to your home, and learn to obey your parents, learn your scriptures, be diligent in your daily occupations, let no love of ease tempt you to neglect cleanliness of person or decency of dress; and then, having learned this, come back to me, and you may perhaps be allowed to enter into the companionship of my followers." Indolence is the disease underlying all other moral diseases. He who frees himself from the disease of sloth will free himself from all other moral diseases. It is said of the venerable Sariputra, the right-hand disciple of the Buddha, that he daily swept wherever it was necessary, put water into the empty pots and tended the sick. Life under the Vinaya is one of both active and contemplative discipline.

It is often said that the Buddhist bhikshu does not take much interest in practical matters. But this allegation is the result of a narrow way of looking at things. The practical life, as Aristotle has pointed out, need not be a life of action towards others nor a life of thought for the sake of the results of the action. "The name practical belongs much more truly to the thoughts of intrinsic value, thoughts which are ends in themselves: for to attain the end is necessarily a kind of action." But even from a worldly point of view the Buddhist bhikshu has rendered invaluable service to his country and his supporters. In all countries where Buddhism has flourished, the bhikshus have been the pioneers of civilization and the repositories of learning. In India, during the Middle Ages, no places were more famous for learning than Nālandā, Vallabhi, Odāntapuri and Vikramasīla. Nālandā was a seat of universal learning, where all the arts and sciences—*sabdavidya*, *silpasthānavidya*, *chikitsavidya*, *hetuvidya*, *adhyātmnvidya*—were taught. "The monks of Nālandā to the number of several thousands," says Yuan Chuang, "are men of the highest ability. Their conduct is pure and unblamable, although the rules of the monastery are severe. The day is not sufficient for asking and answering profound questions. From morning till night the monks engage in discussion, the old and the young mutually helping one another. Those who cannot answer questions out of the Tripiṭaka are little esteemed, and

are obliged to hide themselves for shame. Hence, learned men from different cities come here in multitudes to settle their doubts and thence the streams of their fame spread far and wide. For this reason, some persons usurp the name of Nālandā students, and in going to and fro receive honour and consequence."

Speaking of the work done by the Buddhist bhikshus in Japan, Nobuta Kishimoto says: "It is often said against Buddhism that monks and priests are idle and unprofitable members of the community like drones living on the industry of others. This, in one sense, is true. But we must remember that, if Buddhism introduced into Japan certain numbers of these "drones" of society, it also introduced various arts, such as painting, sculpture and architecture. Most of the famous paintings, sculptures and buildings of the present Japan are religious, but principally Buddhistic. Moreover, the Buddhist monks and priests were not altogether idle and unprofitable. It is true that they were living on the gifts of the believers. But the Christian pastors, too, live on the gifts of the Christians, just as much as the Buddhist clergy do; yet no one calls them idle and unprofitable. Apart from their moral and religious functions it was mostly the monks who, in their pilgrimages in search of quiet spots, built roads and spanned bridges, thus making travelling and communication easy. It was often the monks who encouraged the people in the cultivation of the arts of peace and life. Often they themselves led the people in the transformation of waste land into rice fields." But, perhaps, the greatest value of Buddhism to Japan was educational. Going hand-in-hand with Chinese culture, Buddhism offered the boon of education to all. The Buddhist schools became centres of popular instruction. The village schools were all connected with Buddhist temples. The common people were taught the arts of reading and writing, ethics and philosophy for a nominal cost. The Buddhist bhikshu was the schoolmaster everywhere, and even the Imperial household employed Buddhist instructors. In Burma also every monastery is a school, and the bhikshus impart the elements of education to all, free of charge. No wonder that in Burma every man is able to read and write! Only in a Buddhist country such a simple solution of the problem of mass education would have been possible.

Some critics allege that the Buddha failed to inculcate the civic virtues comprehended in the idea of patriotism. This objection rests on ignorance. It is said in the *Mārasamyutta* (*Vagga 2*) that the Blessed One once asked himself if it would not

be possible, following the teachings of the Dharma, to rule as a king who does not himself slaughter living beings, nor permits slaughter by others ; who does not himself oppress people, nor sanctions oppression by others ; who has himself no troubles and sorrows, nor causes trouble and sorrow to others. Of such a king it is that the *Jatakamāla* says : “ On friendliness does his strength rest, not on his motley-bannered army, which he keeps only to comply with custom. He knows not anger, nor does he speak harsh words. He protects his land in the proper manner. Righteousness is the rule of his actions, not political wisdom, that base science. His wealth serves to honour the virtuous. And endowed with marvellous qualities, still he does not take unto himself either the wealth of the wicked, or pride.” There can be no doubt that Emperor Asoka, the Dharmarāja of the Buddhist books,\* sought to realise this ideal. By precept and example he tried to make his people better and happier. “ In this way,” says Asoka in his edicts, “ acts of religion are promoted in the world, as well as the practice of religion, *viz.*, mercy and charity, truth and purity, kindness and goodness. The manifold acts of goodness which I accomplish serve as an example.” “ For me there cannot be too much activity in the administration of justice. It is my duty to procure by my instructions the good of the public ; and in incessant activity and the proper administration of justice lies the root of public good, and nothing is more efficacious than this. All my endeavours have but this one object,—to pay this debt due to my people ! ” “ All men (are like) my children. As I desire that (my) children should be safe now and hereafter, so do I desire (this) to all men.” “ The organization of Dharma is thus the chief duty of Government. For that purpose superintendents of morals (*dharma-mahāmātrās*), distinct from the clergy and the religious orders, whose work is of a higher importance than religious creeds and practices, namely, to promote humanity, good behaviour and reverence. For this is the rule : government by Dharma, progress by Dharma, security by Dharma.” He insisted upon all his officers strictly observing the principles of *danda-samata* and *vyavahāra-samata*, that is, the equality of all in the eye of the law, irrespective of caste, colour and creed. No sovereign ever rendered to his country a greater service than did Asoka to India. Asoka possessed in abundance what Aristotle calls practical wisdom, the gift and ability of the statesman to

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\* See *Divyāvadāna*.

guide the organization, habituation and education of mankind in the direction of theoretical wisdom, that higher activity which finds its expression in fine art, high thinking and religion. His aim was the creation of a society in which saintliness, intelligence, knowledge, science, poetry and fine arts would flourish. No wonder that his name is venerated from the Volga to Japan and from Siam to Lake Baikal! "If the greatness of a man," as Koeppen\* says, "may be measured by the number of hearts that cherish his memory and by the number of lips that have uttered and still utter his name with reverence, then surely Asoka is greater than Cæsar or Charles the Great."

*Le roi est mort. Vive le roi!* is not an idea pertaining to the essence of Buddhism. The Dharma which inculcates that every one ought to be a lamp unto oneself cannot reconcile itself to the traditional Hindu theory of kingship. The latter theory is rooted in caste, which requires the presence of an absolute and responsible ruler, uniting in his own person, all legislature, for the purpose of enforcing the rules of the various castes. On the other hand, the ideal underlying the Samgha is self-government, the government of all, for all, by all. At the various *Sangāṭis* (councils) disputes were settled by ballot and not by authority. While in Hindu monasteries the dying abbot nominates his successor, in Burma the head of the Samgha, the Thathanabaing, is elected by all the members of the Samgha. In the time of the Buddha there were many tiny self-governing republics. The Vajjians (the Vithehas of Mithilā and the Licchavis of Vaisālī) formed a powerful confederacy of this kind. The Buddha clearly understood the prime conditions upon which the welfare of a republic depend. Once Ajātasatru, the king of Magadha, planned an attack upon the Vajjians, and sent his prime-minister to inform the Buddha of his purpose. When the Blessed One received the message, he asked Ānanda if the Vajjians held full and frequent assemblies. On Ānanda's answering in the affirmative, the Master said: "So long as the Vajjians hold these full and frequent assemblies, they may be expected not to decline, but to prosper. So long as they meet in concord, so long as they honour their elders, so long as they respect womanhood, so long as they remain righteous, performing all proper duties, so long as they extend rightful protection, defence and support to the holy ones, the Vajjians may be expected not to decline but to prosper."

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\* Religion des Buddha.

Then, turning to the king's messenger the Buddha said : " When I staid at Vaisālī, I taught the Vajji these conditions of welfare, that so long as they should remain well instructed, so long as they will continue in the right path, so long as they should live up to the precepts of righteousness, we could expect them not to decline, but to prosper." As soon as the prime-minister had gone, the Buddha called together the bhikshus and spoke to them on the conditions of the welfare of a community. " So long, O bhikshus, as the brethren hold full and frequent assemblies, meeting in concord, rising in concord, and attending in concord to the affairs of the Samgha ; so long as they, O brethren, do not abrogate that which experience has proved to be good, and introduce nothing except such things as have been carefully tested ; so long as their elders practise justice ; so long as the brethren esteem, revere, and support their elders, and hearken unto their words ; so long as the brethren are not under the influence of craving, but delight in the blessings of religion, so that good and holy men shall come to them and dwell among them in quiet ; so long as the brethren shall not be addicted to sloth and idleness ; so long as the brethren shall exercise themselves in the sevenfold higher wisdom of mental activity, search after truth, energy, joy, modesty, self-control, earnest contemplation, and equanimity of mind ; so long the Samgha may be expected not to decline but to prosper. Therefore, O bhikshus, be full of faith, modest in heart, afraid of sin, anxious to learn, strong in energy, active in mind, and full of wisdom."

This surely implies that the Master's ideal of a government was not an absolute or limited monarchy, nor was it merely a form of democracy. It means something higher, the realization of a society in which will no longer exist the atrocities of individual and national strife, any barriers between race and race ; in which there will be no poor but the poor in spirit, no rich but the rich in goodness, love and wisdom ; in which there can be no idle because every one will have opportunity for work and find the joy of living in doing ; in which there will be no overworked and broken down as a fair distribution of the work of the world will lighten the labour of each ; in which the earth will be turned into a veritable *Sukhāvati*, where man untrammelled by want and suffering, will move rapidly onward in his march towards the haven of perfection.

Even if the Buddha had not given us any special political teaching, he laid the foundation for the development of those

virtues in which all civic welfare has its roots. The basic principle of Buddhism being the adequacy of man and the sufficiency of reason as a guide, no Buddhist who makes the truth his sole preoccupation can submit to any authority which is outside the truth itself. Disobedience to an external authority may bring exile or imprisonment or torture, but disobedience to the authority within us makes us fools. Hence Buddhism recognises in the appeal to one's self-respect and the claims of an enlightened society an authority as strong as the appeal to the fear of punishment and the hope of reward. The life of reason, in which is contained the most exalted liberty, is sufficient for the foundation of social duty and justice, for the effective guarantee of human co-operation, which is the condition and soul of the stable state.

Spurning both sensuality and asceticism the Dharma urges a healthy simplification in living, discerning that the higher life must be rooted in hygiene, and not in hysteria. It therefore regards the mortification of all desire, the stultification of the will, as mere madness. Though it freely accepts the inevitable, it does not despair but diverts the mind from things that cannot satisfy—because they cannot endure—to aims intellectual and ethical. It is not the severing of the ties of life that constitutes renunciation, but the utter eradication of egoism. It is not the shaving of the head, nor the mowing of the chin, nor the donning of the yellow robe (*samjñā bhikshu*) nor the taking of the vows (*pratijñā bhikshu*) nor the begging of food (*bhikshana ḡilo bhikshu*), nor even the strict observance of the rules of the Vinaya (*jñāptichaturthakarmādyupasampanno bhikshu*) that constitutes *bhikshuta*, but it is *bhinna kleṣatā*, the weeding of the heart from passion and pride, from lust and greed. On one occasion a Nirgrantha asked the Buddha: "Who is the righteous man? Who is the learned man? Who is the reverend man? What is true beauty and grace? Who is a sramaṇa? Who is a true bhikshu? Who is the truly enlightened? Who is the man that observes the rules of the Dharma?" The Blessed One answered: "He is a righteous man who is always anxious and desirous to learn, who walks uprightly, who ponders on and considers the character of precious wisdom. He is a learned man who depends not on any fine distinction of words, who is free from fear and apprehension, who stands by what is right. The reverend man is not he who has become a sexagenarian with form bent, with hair white, for with all that he may be a fool; but he who ponders and inquires into the Dharma, who regulates and restrains his conduct, who is

full of virtue and love, who is able to penetrate into hidden secrets and is pure. The graceful and perfect man is not he who possesses beauty of form like the flowers that charm us ; not he who covets and longs for the empty vanities of personal adornment ; not he whose words and conduct are opposed to one another ; but he who is able to give up every vicious course, who has got rid of evil from the very root, who is enlightened without a remnant of hatred. The *sramana* is not he who is shaven perforce, who speaks untruth, and covets possession, or who is a slave of desire like the rest of men ; but he who is able to put an end to every wicked desire, to silence every personal preference, to quiet his mind, and put an end to selfish thought. The *bhikshu* is not he who at stated times begs his food, not he who, walking uprightly, desires to be taken as a disciple, with a view to pass for a man of character ; but he who has given up every source of sin, who by wisdom is able to crush every evil inclination, and who lives continently and purely. The truly enlightened man is not he who is simply mute, whilst the busy work of his mind is impure—merely accommodating to outward rules ; but he whose heart is free from hankering, whose inward life is pure and spiritual, and perfectly unmoved by this or that. The man of Bodhi is not he who merely saves the life of all beings, but he who is filled with universal love and benevolence, who has no malice in his heart. And the man who observes the Dharma is not he who talks much, but he who keeps himself in subjection to the Dharma, although he be a plain, untaught man, always guarding the way with increasing watchfulness.”

“ He has spued out sin, who everywhere  
Is firm in virtue, and whose chiefest care  
Is to control his passions and be true,  
He well deserves the yellow robe to wear.”

“ Restrained of hand, restrained of foot, restrained in speech, the best of the self-controlled, reflective, calm, content, alone,—it is he that is a true *bhikshu* ” says the *Dharmapada*. The *bhikshu* must be a treasure of virtue, knowledge, gentleness, patience, compassion, austerity and prudence, but he is no ascetic. He may not eat for sport, excess or personal charm, but he eats enough for the sustenance and preservation of the body, for allaying hunger and for aiding in the attainment of Bodhi. He may not use garlands, scents, unguents, or ornaments, but he is clean and tidy. His yellow robes may not be fine and charming,



but they are decent and comfortable. He may not live in a proud dwelling, but he always lives under a roof sheltered from the weather. He may not use a high or broad bed, but he sleeps on a soft couch. He may abstain from dancing,\* singing and stage plays, but he never cuts himself off from society. He may live a retired life, but he is freely accessible to men and women, with whom he talks on religious subjects. Not being a priest he may have no concern with births, deaths, or marriages, but he is devoted to stimulating faith, hope and enthusiasm in the cause of the ideal portrayed in the Dharmakāya. He may not beg his food, he may not speak of his wants to others, but he lives on their charity, not because of indolence, but because it is a part of the discipline that trains his mind to humility. He may have leisure to devote his mind to what he feels to be its need, but he is engaged in spreading the knowledge of the Dharma. He may be free, but he does not do what he likes. He may acknowledge no superior, but he avows obedience to the Dharma that he reverences and approves. He may have no control over others, but he controls his senses and his mind. He may claim no rights and privileges, but he discharges his duties to his fellows. He may have no craving for wordly pleasures, but he longs after good for the sake of others. He may strive for self-perfection, but he attains it through self-abnegation and happy thoughts of others and their happiness. He is honoured not for his learning or knowledge, but for being a treasure of purity, kindness, forbearance, benevolence, wisdom and an example to others to

“Dismiss their ideals of wealth and grandeur betimes,  
And heap up a store of that to which may never come  
Any prospect of perishing, nor danger of decay.”

## CHAPTER VIII

### BUDDHISM AND PESSIMISM

IN his principal work, *The World as Will and Idea*, Schopenhauer declares : " If I were to take the result of my philosophy as the standard of truth, I would be obliged to concede to Buddhism the pre-eminence over the rest. In any case it must be a satisfaction to me to see my teaching in such close agreement with a religion which the majority of mankind upon the earth hold as their own." To Schopenhauer this avowal of a close agreement between his philosophy and Buddhism might have been a gratification, but for Buddhism it has certainly proved a misfortune. It has given rise to a serious misconception about Buddhism. The Buddhist ideal has been misjudged to be the result of a Schopenhauerian pessimism as to the worth and promise of life. Nothing can really be more untrue than the identification of Buddhism with any form of pessimism.

The keynote of Schopenhauer's philosophy is that inward discord is the very law of human nature. Consequently man, so long as he is conscious, must be an unhappy creature. " Painless the battle of life," says Schopenhauer, " cannot be, it may not end without bloodshed, and in any case man must mourn." On the contrary, the very aim of Buddhism is inward harmony, the Great Peace in which one can find refuge from the struggle and turmoil of life. " He whose delight is inward, who is tranquil and happy when alone—him they call a true bhikshu ; " says the *Dhammapada*. Not to despair, not to mourn is the burden of much of the teaching of the Buddha to his disciples. When Ānanda was mourning over Sāriputra's death, the Blessed One said :

" Ānanda, often and often have I sought to bring shelter to your mind from the misery caused by such grief as this. There are two things alone that can separate us from father and mother, from brother and sister, from all those who are most cherished by us, and those two things are distance and death. Think not that I, though the Buddha, have not felt all this even as any other of you ; was I not alone when I was seeking wisdom in the wilderness ?

" And yet what would I have gained by wailing and lamenting either for myself or for others ? Would it have brought to me

any solace from my loneliness ? Would it have been any help to those whom I had left ? There is nothing that can happen to us, however terrible, however miserable, that can justify tears and lamentations and make them aught but a weakness."

It is indeed true that the Buddha recognises the existence of suffering and misery as honestly and fully as the deepest pessimist. It is also true that he insists strongly on the necessity of renouncing all sensuality, worldly ambitions, and feverish cravings, and the longing for mere life as such here or in another world. If he condemns as worthless what men generally consider natural and valuable, he does so because he finds them to be defilements (*ācrava*) which stand as obstacles in the way of attaining perfect bliss. Worldly ambitions arise from a cleaving to things changeable, and as such cannot but prove dangerous. There is nothing in this world which is not transient or illusory. Health may last long but it is finally undermined by disease and decay. We covet wealth, but it has no value apart from its ability to secure pleasure, power, success, or fame. Nobody believes in the permanence of these latter. As Lord Bacon says :

" The world's a bubble, and the life of man  
Less than a span :  
In his conception wretched, from the womb  
So to the tomb ;  
Curst from his cradle, and brought up to years  
With cares and fears,  
Who then to frail mortality shall trust,  
But limns on water, or but writes in dust.

" Yet whilst with sorrow here we live opprest,  
What life is best ?  
Courts are but only superficial schools  
To dandle fools ;  
The rural parts are turned into a den  
Of savage men :  
And where's a city from foul vice so free,  
But may be term'd the worst of all the three ?

" Domestic cares afflict the husband's bed,  
Or pains his head :  
Those that live single, take it for a curse,  
Or do things worse :  
Some would have children : those that have them, moan  
Or wish them gone :  
What is it, then, to have, or have no wife,  
But single thralldom, or a double strife ?

" Our own affections still at home to please  
     Is a disease :  
 To cross the seas to any foreign soil,  
     Peril and toil :  
 Wars with their noise affright 'us ; when they cease,  
     We are worse in peace ;—  
 What then remains, but that we still should cry  
 For being born, or being born, to die ? "

Life for its own sake is not worth living. If mere existence satisfied us, we should want for nothing. On the other hand, man finds delight only when he is struggling for the satisfaction of some want. When he has nothing to struggle for, man feels the emptiness of life in the form of boredom. Man's hankering for the strange and unusual proves beyond doubt how much he feels the tedium of ordinary life. Mere quantity of life, without quality, stands self-condemned. A life worth living is one that is full of active aspiration for something higher and nobler, a life full of culture and refinement, philosophic enthusiasm and earnest devotion to the good of others. And of such life the Dharma can never say we have enough. Often and often the Buddhistic books impress upon us the necessity of such life. Here is what the *Sutra of four perfections* says about the life worthy of an aspirant after Bodhi :—

" What is the fruit of the thought of the bodhisatva ?  
 Answer :—Higher morality, higher perception of truth, great love, great pity. A spirit exempt from anger ; a spirit of compassion for the erring ; a spirit which forbids falling away from wisdom : a spirit of perseverance to the end."

" What is his rule of duty ?—To attach himself with high desire to all laws of virtue ; not to despise the ignorant ; to be a friend to all men ; to expect no more from new births."

" What his bliss ?—The joy of having seen a Buddha, of having heard the Dharma ; of not repenting in giving ; of having procured the good of all creatures."

" What his health ?—The sound body, the mind not drawn to perishing things ; bringing all beings into right and equal condition ; freedom from doubt on every point relating to the Dharma."

" To what should he adhere ?—To meditation ; to beneficence ; to compassionate love ; to the discipline of wisdom."

" Since consciousness, body, life, self are impermanent, therefore, is there perfection in morality, in tranquillity, in wisdom, in release."

The Blessed One has nowhere condemned all life, because it results, and must inevitably result, in more pain than bliss. No doubt all life is a struggle of some sort, and struggle we must to live. Were this struggle, as Christianity teaches, the result of sin, and the misery accompanying it a punishment from heaven, this world would be the worst possible and we should be driven to pessimism. But the Dharma teaches that the painfulness of this struggle arises from our point of view. It is because we judge of existence by the morbid cravings of fantastic sentimentalism that we do not find a sufficient comfort in life. Life is so miserable, because we struggle in the interest of self, and not in the interest of truth and righteousness. How can he be happy who struggles in life with envy, hatred, and lust, so that he himself may be great or powerful, rich or famous? He that is anxious about his personal happiness must necessarily be full of fear. He may be indifferent to the misery of his fellow-beings, he may have his fill of the good things of the world, but he cannot be blind to the fact that the same end awaits us all. He alone can be truly happy who has realised that life and death are one. He who resigns to death that which belongs to death will be calm and self-possessed, whatever be his fate. Man may try to console himself with all sorts of chimeras and falsehoods, but experience shows how reluctant men are to die, whether they be pessimists or devout believers in a future life in a happy world. Just four days before his death, Charles Renouvier, a famous French philosopher, wrote: "I have no illusions regarding my condition. I know that I am soon to die, in a week or, perhaps, two, and yet I have so many things to say about our doctrine. At my age one has no right to hope. One's days or one's hours are numbered. I must be resigned . . . I cannot die without regret that I can in no way foresee what will become of my ideas. Besides I am going before I have said my last word. One always has to leave before terminating one's task. This is one of the saddest of the sadnesses of life . . . This is not all. When one is old, very old, habituated to life, it is very difficult to die. I readily believe that young people accept the idea of death more easily than the old. When one is beyond eighty years, he becomes cowardly and does not wish to die, and when one knows beyond question that death is near, a feeling of melancholy pervades the soul. . . I have studied the question in all its aspects. I know that I am going to die. It is not the philosopher in me that protests. The

philosopher in me does not believe in death, it is the old man who has not the courage to face the inevitable. However, one must be resigned." These words illustrate how men are blindly athirst for life. This thirst cannot be got rid of except by the complete liberation from the illusion of self. Hence, according to the Dharma, what we should strive for is not life but peace, that bracing satisfaction which is born of the clear comprehension of the nature of the universe, the discriminating insight into that which must be, and the harmonious living in relation to the universal whole—the Great Peace of Nirvana.

If the Buddha has taught us the vanity of grief and the selfishness of sorrow, if he has taught us to be resigned before the inevitable, he has also shown us the means of attaining true happiness. The Blessed One has fully recognised the fact that the world runs desperately after happiness in some form or other. But he has at the same time pointed out that happiness will not be found if it is directly sought, just as one aiming at the bull's eye of a target inevitably misses it. Nay more; the Dharma teaches that life would not be worth living, if its goal were the mere satisfaction of egoistic desires. If happiness in the eudæmonistic sense were the ideal of human life, it were better to return to the savage, if not the animal, state. Can it be denied that the animal and the savage are more happy than the civilized man of culture? No doubt civilization and culture have removed many evils and created many new comforts, but with them also have come into existence many new previously unknown sufferings, which are becoming keener and more intense with advancing refinement and increasing sensibility. While the animal suffers from actually existing pain, man's reason makes him multiply his afflictions by anticipation and rumination. As Kant has said, if the special purpose of a being endowed with reason and will were only its self-preservation and prosperity, or, in a word, its happiness as ordinarily understood, the creature has been badly equipped to secure the end in view. A pig with its instincts is perfectly happy, while a Socrates highly endowed with reason is always unhappy. Accordingly, the goal set before man by the Dharma is not happiness but perfection. "And who have perfection? Is it the pleasure-loving, or the painstaking? The right answer is: The painstaking, not the easy-going." But he who attains perfection also enjoys the bliss arising from the complete realization of his being. In one place the Buddha says: "Of those that live happily in this world am I also one." As the

*Dhammapada* says, he who attaches himself to the teaching of the Buddha lives happily free from ailments among the careworn, free from repining among men sick at heart, free from greed among men overpowered by greed, free from ill-will among the hating. He who has overcome all hindrances brightens the world like the moon free from clouds, and like the celestials feeds upon changeless bliss.

“ Happy is the Buddhist’s fate  
For his heart knows not of hate.  
Haters may be all around,  
Yet in him no hate is found.

“ Happy is the Buddhist’s fate  
He all pining makes abate.  
Pining may seize all around,  
Yet in him no pining’s found.

“ Happy is the Buddhist’s fate  
Him no greed will agitate  
In the world may greed abound,  
Yet in him no greed is found.

“ Happily then let us live,  
Joyously our service give,  
Quench all pining, hate and greed :  
Happy is the life we lead.”—*Dhammapada*, 197—200.

A tree is judged by its fruit. Were Buddhism, as some writers try to make out, a dark and dreary creed characterised by a feeling of melancholy which bemoans the unreality of being, what should have been its effect upon the peoples professing it ? They should be gloomy, cheerless, and entirely apathetic to all that interests man in life. But what is the reality ? Has there been any people on the face of the earth more cheerful and happy than the Buddhists of Burma. Says Mr. Scott O’Connor in *The Silken East* : “ Yet of all peoples of the earth the Burmese are probably the happiest. Most of the requisites of the modern Utopias they already possess : leisure, independence, absolute equality, the nearest approach to a perfect distribution of wealth ; in addition a happy temper cheerful in all adversities. Who is there in the world who would not wish for some at least of these things for himself ? And many, struggling with all the problems of modern life, of pauperism, of congestion in great cities, with social hatreds and the deep antagonism of classes, look in vain as for an unattainable thing for what the Burmese race, as a whole, has attained.” Much the same can be said of the Siamese and the Japanese. There is nothing in the life of any people professing Buddhism which can give any room for characterising

the faith which they profess as a 'religion of despair.' How dreary on the contrary, must be a religion which makes its adherents bow down in submissive awe before a terrible monster who revels in preying over the weak? True religion is not that which turns man into a cur, but that which makes him more of a man and removes from him the feeling of dependence. The Dharma makes man free by raising him, through self-culture and self-control, to the supreme heights of perfection.

" Resolve to be thyself ; and know that he,  
Who finds himself, loses his misery."

Man has furthered evolution unconsciously and for personal ends, but the Dharma teaches that it is his duty to do so deliberately and systematically for the attainment of perfection. For Buddhism life is " neither as pretty as rose pink nor as repulsive as dirty drab." It admits the plain fact that life is not worth its own troubles, if we live merely for the selfish enjoyment of life. It therefore places the value of life in ideals that transcend the narrow limits of individual existence. It aims not merely at the alleviation of present suffering, but also the creation of conditions under which no suffering can exist. As Aristotle says, " the wise man seeks after freedom from pain, not pleasure." So does the Buddhist direct his actions to the prevention and removal of suffering without caring for any pleasure which may thereby be attained or promoted. Still this does not imply the denial of the blessings of life. On the contrary, when the Blessed One was asked to declare what he regarded as the blessings of life, he did not like the pessimist say :

" Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,  
Count o'er thy days from anguish free ;  
And know, whatever thou hast been,  
'Tis something better—not to be."

But he replied :

" The succouring of mother and father,  
The cherishing of child and wife,  
The following of a peaceful calling,  
This is the greatest blessing.  
" Acts of charity, a pious life,  
Aid rendered to your kin,  
And actions that are blameless,  
This is the greatest blessing.  
" Self-discipline and purity,  
The comprehension of the four Great Truths,  
And the attainment of Nirvāṇa,  
This is the greatest blessing."—*Mangala Sutta.*



## CHAPTER IX

### THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

“TWO extremes, there are,” said the Blessed One in his first sermon at Benares, “which he who strives after holiness must avoid. Which two?—A life addicted to pleasure, for it is enervating, vulgar, mean and worthless—and a life given to self-mortification, for it is painful, vain and profitless. By avoiding both these extremes has the Tathāgata arrived at the Middle Path (*Madhyama pratipada*), which leads to insight, to wisdom; to knowledge, to peace, to Nirvāṇa. But which is this Middle Path?—It is the Noble Eightfold Path.”

No man can truly call himself a Buddhist, if he has not entered the Noble Eightfold Path. Mere study and investigation of the teachings of the Buddha do not qualify one to be a Buddhist, if he is not at the same time pursuing the Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path represents the morality of Buddhism, and in Buddhism the moral life is no mere adjunct but its very core and essence. He who has merely understood the Dharma but has not shaped his life and thought in accordance with its spirit is like one who having read a book on cookery imagines that he has eaten the sweets described in the book.

Straight and broad indeed is the noble path that leads to blessedness, but no one can traverse it unless he is fully equipped with the eight essentials. The torch of right belief (*samyag drishti*) must light his way. Right aspiration (*samyag samkalpa*) must be his guide. Right speech (*samyag vāk*) must form his dwelling place on the road. Right action (*samyag karma*) must be his erect gait, and right living (*samyag ājīva*) must form his refreshments on the road. Right effort (*samyag vyayāma*) must be his steps, right thought (*samyag smṛiti*) his breath, and right tranquillity (*samyag samādhi*) his sleeping couch.\*

The real history of the development of man consists in the history of his beliefs. History, whether it be of the arts or of the sciences, or of society or of religion, always involves an account of man's beliefs and their growth. Men's doings are largely a reflection of their beliefs. Consequently, all superstitious customs

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\* Asvagosha's *Buddha-charita*.

and practices are the result of an irrational state of mind issuing logically from wrong beliefs. It is therefore natural that right belief should form the first equipment for the pilgrimage on the noble path of purity. Again the spring of all action is motive, and the intellectual stimulus to motive is belief. The starting point determines the goal and the direction towards the goal. Hence only right belief can lead man to right action.

Animistic and metaphysical beliefs have been the fruitful sources of religious error. The right starting point for religion can be nothing else than the universally recognised fact of the existence of sorrow and suffering, from which every religion proposes to save mankind. The right comprehension of the existence of misery and its cause, the illusion of a permanent self, will enable one to find easily the means of removing it. But the belief in a soul or the dependence on a supernatural being for one's salvation can only lead to error which would stultify one's efforts towards emancipation from misery|

It is the possession of the right belief that differentiates the educated from the uneducated, the thoughtful from the unreflecting. People come by their beliefs in four different ways. Some merely take refuge in the calm satisfaction of a faith that their view alone is the right one, and look with pity, contempt, or even horror on all other views. These men of tenacity are like the ostrich that buries its head in the sand as danger approaches and then feels satisfied that there is no danger. More often, imposed authority forms the expeditious means of producing a general belief. But this method, though lightly tolerated by the many, is not acceptable to the thoughtful few, who easily penetrate the mist of dogma, and, detecting the pretentiousness of all infallibility, look elsewhere for obtaining a sounder belief. Even when freed from the fetters of authority, men frequently fall victims to their hopes and wishes, and accept views which seem plausible, agreeable, or elevating. From this condition of mind no progress can result. Only when one scrutinises one's inclinations and wishes, and cares more for the validity of one's reasoning than for its agreeableness, would it be possible to find the truth. It is one of the glories of Buddhism that it appeals to reason and science, and not to blind faith and authority. Only he who has set aside vain hopes and wishes can perceive that the power with which he combats suffering and sorrow is natural and not supernatural. Only the sceptre of reason and science can

be a safeguard to all the most cherished opportunities for right action, right thought, and right peace.

When an earnest intelligent man has gained right views concerning the existence of misery, its cause and its cessation, how could he find satisfaction in pleasure-seeking? He has found that to seek pleasure is to multiply pain. When one has begun to see things as they are, how could he be swayed by motives of dollars and cents, or of mere personal interest? When one has perceived that there is the infinite to traverse and the perfect to attain, how can he find happiness in repose? His mind will always be directed towards the attainment of *bodhi*. His aspiration will be to free his mind from doubts and contradictions as to the possibility of reaching the goal; to be paying homage to the Blessed One by investigating his Dharma and disciplining himself in accordance with its teaching; to abandon the idea of separateness; and to deliver himself and all beings drowned in the sea of misery by the employment of the various expedients which lead to the haven of the Great Peace. "What then, O friend, is right aspiration?" says the *Sacchavibhanga*: "It is the longing for renunciation; the hope to live in love with all; the aspiration after true humanity." "May I be a balm to the sick, their healer and servitor, until sickness come never again; may I quench with rains of food and drink the anguish of hunger and thirst; may I be in the famine of ages' end their drink and meat; may I become the unfailing store for the poor, and serve them with manifold things for their need. My own being and my pleasures, all my righteousness in the past, present, and future I surrender with equanimity so that all creatures may reach their goal. Peace lies in the surrender of all things, and my spirit is fain for peace; if I must surrender all, it is best to give it for fellow-creatures. I yield myself to all living beings to deal with me as they desire; they may smite or revile me for ever, bestrew me with dust, play with my body, laugh and wanton; I have given them my body, why shall I be anxious? Let them make me do whatever works bring them pleasure; but may never mishap befall any of them by reason of me. If the spirit of any be wroth or pleased with me, may that be ever a cause for them to win all their desires. May all who slander me, or do me hurt, or jeer at me, gain a share in *bodhi*. I would be a protector of the unprotected, a guide of wayfarers, a ship, a dyke, and a bridge for them who seek the further shore; a lamp for them that need a lamp, a bed for them that need a bed, a slave for all beings that

need a slave. As the earth and other elements are for the service of the numberless creatures dwelling in the whole universe, so may I in various ways support the whole sphere of life lodged in space, until all be at peace." Such is, according to the *Bodhicharyāvatāra*, the manner in which the aspirant should frame the thought of *bodhi* for the welfare of the world.

An aspiration that is not accompanied by a firm resolution to attain it, cannot be productive of any good. As Nagasena puts it, the germ of Buddhahood has for *kalāla* the thought of enlightenment, for *arbuda* compassion, and for *peṇi* benevolence, but it becomes *ghana*\* only by immovable resolution. The determination must proceed neither from ambition, nor from thirst of glory, nor as a means of gaining heaven, nor from the desire to secure supreme and everlasting bliss for oneself, but solely from the desire to secure the benefit of others. This resolve must make the aspirant say : " I shall not retreat. I shall not be despondent. It is not for me a matter of option, as I have taken the resolution of leading all creatures to the other shore. I have to bear the burdens of all creatures " (*Vajradvaja sutra*). It is with this firm resolve to attain *bodhi* (*bodhi pranidhichitta*) that the aspirant must enter on the prescribed course of self-culture and self-control.

Aspirations and resolutions will be of little avail, if they are not followed by practices which can secure the end in view. The inertia of *karma*, the resisting force in which our past actions are stored up, cannot be overcome by mere aspiration. The inner life of the individual will become strengthened only when it energises into the external world as activity. Consequently, right aspirations must find objective manifestation in right speech, right action and right living.

" To abstain from falsehood, to abstain from back-biting, to abstain from harsh language, and to abstain from frivolous talk is called right speech." The words of one who aspires to the higher life must be kind, open, truthful, unequivocal ; encouraging to others and helpful in improving them ; and free from vanity and bitterness of feeling. He must not " gossip about great people " ; he must not speak at all about " meats, drinks, clothes, perfumes, couches, equipages, women, warriors, demigods, fortune-telling, hidden treasures, ghost stories, nor about empty tales concerning things that are not." Whatever he speaks he must

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\* The italicised words represent the different stages of an embryo.

speak kindly and with a pure thought. "Those who have sin at heart, but are sweet of speech," says the *Lalita Vistara*, "are like a pitcher smeared with nectar, but full of poison."

Hand-in-hand with the elimination of selfishness from one's speech must proceed the purification of one's acts from all egoistic taint. "*Atmabhāvān tathā bhogān sarvatrāvagamam subham nirapekshastyajām yeshā sarvasatvārtha siddhaye*—I give up all my pleasures and enjoyments for the good and benefit of all beings." So says the *Bodhicharyāvatāra*. The aim of right action is not one's own happiness which may result from it. Right action consists in the avoidance of all that is subversive of the higher life and in the doing of all that is good and noble. Progress in the higher life cannot be effected by means of rituals, sacrifices, prayers and incantations, and these are therefore forbidden. On one occasion, we are told, the Blessed One, while preaching, sneezed and the bhikshus interrupted the discourse by shouting: Long life to the Blessed One, as is the custom even now among the Hindus. The Lord admonished the audience saying: "Now if a man has sneezed and some one says, Long life to you! can he live or die on that account?" On another occasion a Brahman told the Blessed One that bathing in the Bahuka river washed a sinner of his sins and procured religious merit. Thereupon the Master said: "The Bahukā, the Adhikā, the Gayā, the Sundarī, even the Sarasvatī at Prayagā as also the Bahumatī, cannot purify the fool of his sin, bathe he himself ever so often. What can the Sundarikā do? What Prayagā? What the river Bahukā? No river can cleanse the doer of evil, the man of malice, the perpetrator of crime. To the pure it is ever the holy month of Phaggu. To the pure it is always a perpetual fast. To the man of good deeds it is a vow everlasting. Have thy bath here, even here, O Brahman? Be kind to all beings. If thou speaketh not false; if thou killeth not life; if thou taketh not what is given thee; secure in self-denial—what wouldst thou gain by going to Gayā? Any water is Gayā to thee." There are no fast days in Buddhism. While other religions preach: "Fast and pray," Buddhism teaches: "Feast and contemplate." The opposition of Buddhism to fasts was so strong that, when a fusion took place between Buddhism and Vaishnavism at Jagannath (modern Puri), the latter accepted the prohibition of fasting at Puri. Outside the gate of this holy city we find an emaciated figure of *Ekādaṣī*, the personification of the fast on the 11th day of the moon, so sacred to every Vaishnavite all over India, but she cannot

enter the city, as the fast is prohibited there. For the Buddhist real merit (*puṇyam*) is acquired by the practice of morality (*śīla*) and charity (*dāna*). "Not superstitious rites," as Asoka says in his edicts, "but kindness to servants and underlings, respect to those deserving of respect, self-control coupled with kindness in dealing with living creatures ; these and virtuous deeds of like nature are verily the rites that ought everywhere to be performed." In one place, says the World-honoured : "If a man perform each month a thousand sacrifices and go on making offerings without cessation, this is not equal to that man's conduct who but for a moment, with undivided attention, fixes his mind upon *dharma*. To sacrifice to spirits to obtain merit, or expecting reward after this life, the resulting happiness is not one-quarter of that man's who is ever intent on good conduct." The attribution of supernatural properties to amulets, numbers, pilgrimages, or relics is wholly opposed to the spirit of Buddhism.

The practice of morality (*śīla*) consists in the observance of all moral precepts ; in purity of intention and modesty with regard to oneself ; in feeling fear, shame and remorse at the smallest violation of any of them ; in not giving room for blame or disgust ; in practising those deeds which lead to moderation and contentment, and in endeavouring to induce all human beings to abandon evil and practise virtue. He alone truly practises morality, who desists from evil deeds when the best opportunities present themselves for doing evil. In Buddhism the moral life is of fundamental importance. Of all the *pāramitās*, the excellences which form the means of arriving at Nirvāṇa, the *śīla pāramitā* is the foundation. Some of the other *pāramitās* may in some respects be higher than *śīla*, but they may be dispensed with, if necessary, for the sake of *śīla*, as the latter, owing to its being the basis of good acts, can on no account be neglected. The essence of *śīla* is self-preservation for the sole purpose of benefiting creatures.

While morality is in some respects passive (*nivṛitti*), charity is always active (*pravṛitti*). Charity implies much more than the mere observance of certain rules, such as those of *ahimsa* and *adattadāna*. It implies not only some amount of self-sacrifice, but also the feeling of gladness arising from helping those in need of help. How charity is to be practised is clearly inculcated in the Dharma. When people ask one for something, one ought, as far as one's means permit, to supply it ungrudgingly and make them rejoice in it. "The giving of alms is a blessing to him who

receives as well as to him who gives ; but the receiver is inferior to the giver." A true gift is one which sees no distinction of caste or creed, for which nothing is expected in return. That which is given without love, though it be composed of all sweet things, is not worth so much as wild rice given in love. If one finds people threatened with danger, one ought to try every means of rescuing them and impart to them a feeling of fearlessness. The *bodhisattva* is expected to be not only a donor but also one compassionate and forgiving. "Loving and compassionate," said the Blessed One to Anāthapindika, the supporter of the orphans, "he gives with reverence and banishes all hatred, envy and anger." The aim of charity is to moralise the poor by socialising the rich.

Every Buddhist owes it to his fellow to preach the Dharma, the gospel of self-sufficiency and brotherly love. "There is no such charity," says one of Asoka's edicts, "as the charitable gift of the Dharma, no such friendship as the friendship in the Dharma, no such distribution as the distribution of the Dharma, no such kinship as kinship in the Dharma." As far as one is acquainted with the Dharma, it is incumbent on him to instruct others in it, to inculcate to others the truth which is capable of dispelling every grief. The Master, in promulgating the Dharma, intended it for universal diffusion. How can those who have received the benefits of the Dharma, fail to preach it? As Cilabadhra put it in his admonition to Yuan Chuang, "you desire to show your gratitude to the Buddha ; then you should propagate the Sad-dharma ; this is your duty. Forgetful of your own country, you should be ready to meet death ; indifferent to renown or failure, you should labour to open the door for the spread of the holy teaching ; to lead onwards the masses who are deceived by false teaching, to consider others first and yourself afterwards."

In performing acts of charity one's aim ought not to be either fame or any other advantage in this or another world. No doubt one thinks of benefiting others, but one's mind is set wholly on the attainment of Nirvāṇa. Even when there may be no one to profit by one's acts, one's disposition ought to be charitable. When Yuan Chuang was about to be sacrificed to Durga by pirates, his thoughts were : "Let me return and be born here below, that I may instruct and convert these men, and cause them to practice themselves in doing good and to give up their evil deeds and thus by diffusing far and wide the benefits of the Dharma to give rest to all the world."

Compassion is the supreme means of conciliating creatures, which finds expression in liberality, alms giving, affability, obligingness and the sharing of the joys and sorrows of others. As the *Bōdhicharyāvatāra* says, "by the *dānapāramitā* we understand the disposition to live for the good and benefit of all beings." It is the attitude of mind that measures the merit of a charitable act. A legend tells us that in Pushpapura there was the begging bowl of the Buddha, which would become full when the poor put in a single flower, but rarely showed signs of being filled when the rich put in thousands.

"For, if the heart have faith, no gift is small  
To Buddhas or to their disciples true,  
'Tis said no service can be reckoned small  
That's paid to Buddhas, lords of great renown."

Many of the Jātaka stories are also intended to illustrate the same point. These stories are not meant to be understood literally. They merely emphasise the ideal of charity. Though in them we often come across self-destruction, it must be remembered that the Dharma does not regard self-destruction as right. As the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* says, "this body that can do righteous deeds ought not be made to suffer for petty things even in the interest of others. How could it then serve to realise the hopes of all beings? Life should not be abandoned in an impure disposition of pity, but when the body can no longer be serviceable to others, it is time to abandon life in a spirit of pure disinterestedness, as then there can be no degradation attaching to it." He whose end is another world regards this life as comparatively worthless or immoral. Hence there is for him no limit whatever to the destruction or diminution of personal existence. But it is different with the Buddhist. For him birth as a human being is the highest of all births, as in it alone he can succeed in the struggle against ignorance, lust and hatred. Whatever the virtue of generosity may be, it must not be unreasonable or excessive (*atityāga*). The charity of man should not form an obstacle to his spiritual career, unless it be a benefit to some one who is better capable of benefiting beings than he himself. To give one's flesh is good, but to give spiritual food, to preach the Dharma (*dharmadāna*) is certainly better, for no gift is equal to the gift of the Dharma. There will be no necessity for allowing oneself to be devoured by a tiger, if safety (*abhaya*) could be otherwise secured for beings.



The logical outcome of right action is right living. No aspirant for the higher life can be without occupation. Mere going about bowing and scraping to patrons cannot inspire self-confidence and courage, or self-respect and dignity. Every one must take upon himself some duties that will exercise his abilities, and make himself useful to his fellowmen. But the occupation followed should bring no hurt or danger to any living being. Such low arts as divination by dreams, prognostication of good or evil by omens and stars, indulging in prophecies, discovering magical virtue in gems, boasting of supernatural powers, pretending to perform miracles and wonders, the employment of spells and supplications, sacrifices to gods, witchcraft, quibbling (*lokāyata*), all of which involve lying and deceit, are unworthy of the seeker after the higher life.

“ Whoso renounces omens, dreams and signs,  
That man, from superstitious error freed,  
Shall triumph o’er the paired Depravities  
And o’er Attachments to the end of time.”

Similarly he finds his way to all trades blocked with abuses. Lying and fraud, under the names of advertisement and competition, are the approved weapons of trade and commerce. As a well-known writer says: “The ways of trade are grown selfish to the borders of theft and supple to the borders of fraud.” “The general system of our trade is a system of selfishness; is not dictated by the high sentiments of human nature; is not measured by the exact law of reciprocity, much less by the sentiments of love and heroism, but is a system of distrust, of concealment, of superior keenness, not of giving but of taking advantage.” All the lucrative professions are equally unsuited, for each has its own wrongs. The lawyer sells his knowledge to the highest bidder without reference to the equity of the case. The doctor pampers rich invalids for a fee or haggles with the poor for the pence. Each profession finds a tender and very intelligent conscience a disqualification for success. Each requires of the practitioner a certain shutting of the eyes, a certain dapperness and compliance, an acceptance of customs, a sequestration from the sentiments of generosity and love, a compromise of private opinion and lofty integrity. Nay, the evil custom reaches into the whole institution of property, until our laws which establish it and protect it seem not to be the issue of love and reason, but of selfishness.” Further, the moral worth of a profession depends

upon what it can do for the needs of mankind and on what it can also do for the worker in the profession by reason of the moral influence it exerts. Wherever and whenever men have to make a living, they make it, the few by fraud and chicanery, the many by servile labour. To develop virtue, greatness and nobility of character one cannot but live on the labour of others. No wonder, therefore, that the Blessed One found it necessary to lead the life of a preacher of Truth !

The goal of the path of purity being nothing less than the destruction of all sorrows (*kleṣa*) and the removal of all perturbing causes (*āvaraṇa*), mere change in external life and conduct cannot be productive of much benefit unless coupled with a thorough cleansing of the mind. This subjective purification is to be effected by right effort, right thought, and right tranquillity of mind. Right effort consists in practising what are called the *samyakprahāṇas* (*sammappadāna* in Pali), that is to say, in heroically mastering the passions so as to prevent bad qualities from arising; in suppressing sinful thoughts so as to put away bad qualities that have arisen; in producing goodness not previously existing; and in increasing the goodness which already exists by fixed attention and application. The chief aim of right effort is to cultivate a highly developed will as such, namely, the capacity of control. "Mature will," says Professor Sully, "implies the inhibition of certain nerve centres by others . . . a repression of action when conflicting motives arise . . . the maintaining of a definitive purpose beyond the movement and the persistent concentration of mind on this." Thus the Blessed One recommends the novice who is obsessed by some haunting idea of an undesirable character to try five methods in succession for expelling it. "(1) Attend to some good idea; (2) face the danger of the consequences of letting the bad idea develop into action; (3) become inattentive to the bad idea; (4) analyse its antecedents, and so paralyse the sequent impulse; (5) coerce the mind with the aid of bodily tension." These ought not to be confounded with any ascetic practices involving self-mortification. The method of pure asceticism is explicitly and deliberately rejected by the Blessed One. In the *Indriyabhāvanasutta* the Buddha asks a pupil of Parāsariya, a Brahman ascetic, how his master teaches the cultivation of the faculties of sense. The answer is that with the eye he sees no object and with the ear he hears no sound. On that system, rejoins the Blessed One, those

who have their senses best cultivated would be the blind and the deaf. Finding the youth unable to reply, the Master explains to Ānanda the exact nature of the supreme sense-culture of the Noble Path. In this noble discipline the novice is taught to discriminate every sense-consciousness, whether it be pleasant or painful, and appraise it psychologically as a mode of feeling, as something that is changeable, and then view it ethically as inferior to disinterestedness (*upeksha*) which is the attitude of mind he is seeking to acquire or maintain. In this way the attitude of the mind towards sense impressions becomes cognitive and analytic of them as such. And the intellect then dictates by its regulative power how and how much shall really be enjoyed.\*

It is only by the putting forth of effort (*kuṣalotsāha*) and by persistence that one acquires self-control. As the *Bodicharyāvatāra* says, "*virye bodhir yata sthitā nahiviryam vinā puṇyam.*" Without self-confidence and heroic effort there can be no *bodhi*; without strenuous effort in the doing of good deeds there can be no merit. Every aspirant for *bodhi* must be a warrior, so to speak, for he has to wage war for perfect virtue, for lofty endeavour, for sublime wisdom. Intrepidity, contempt of softness, surrender of private interest, obedience to disciplinary rules are as necessary for the aspirant after *bodhi* as for the soldier. How could one destroy anger, envy, pride, attachment to worldly pleasures, and subjugate all disturbing passions and attain freedom from distraction without strenuous effort (*apramāda*)? Without self-control (*ātmaavidheyatā*) and forbearance it is impossible to concentrate one's energy on right objects, to cleanse one's mind and develop holiness. Moral advice may be helpful, moral convictions may direct one's will, but the vigour and persistency with which one's will acts depends more on habit. Habit not only regulates our affections, our attitude towards pleasure and pain, but also engenders a continuity in our actions. The truly ethical life depends upon the daily doing of some worthy action in response to an enlightened point of view. It is therefore absolutely necessary to train the will, not by directing it by mere advice or reasonable suggestion, but by suitably changing the environment and regulating the motives. Only by training, experience and knowledge can one acquire self-confidence, the will-power to

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\* Mrs. C. F. Rhys Davids : *The Will in Buddhism*.

enable one to do one's work without faltering. But it must be borne in mind that will-power has no existence of itself. It is only a disposition to being influenced by one motive in preference to others.

The Dharma does not treat the will as an entity or faculty which is determined by nothing but itself. As the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* says, "*sarvam tat pratyaya balāt svatantrantu navidyate*—nothing comes into existence of itself." Volition is a state of consciousness resulting from the more or less complex co-ordination of a number of states, psychical and physiological, which all united express themselves by an action or an inhibition. The chief factor in the co-ordination is the character, an extremely complex product formed by heredity, prenatal and postnatal physiological conditions, education and experience. Only a part of this psychological activity enters into consciousness in the form of a deliberation. The acts and movements which follow the deliberation result directly from the tendencies and feelings, images and ideas, which have become co-ordinated in the form of a choice. Choice is, therefore, not the cause of anything, but is itself an effect. Our judgments weigh the various attractions of several motives, and the strongest proves victorious. It is indeed true that every person believes that his choice has a determining effect upon the end he is aiming. But it does not follow therefrom that choice in its turn is not completely determined. Who will deny that choice is influenced by the expectation of pleasure and pain? To suppose that choice is without cause would be to admit that the unaccountable and inconsistent actions of the insane form the normal type and standard of comparison. Besides, if choice were uncaused, every choice ought to lead to happiness. No one would of himself choose something miserable. As the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* says, "*yaditu svecchayā siddhiḥ sarvēṣhām ēva dēhinām nabhavet kasya chit dukkham na dukkham kaschid icchati*—if everything could be as one willed, there should be no misery at all in the world." The moral life of man is inseparable from nature and society. He cannot be separated from the whole of which he, as a finite individuality, is but a part.

Free will\* has, therefore, no existence except in the imagination

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\* Kant tries to make out that free will is a postulate of practical reason. The term postulate, as Schopenhauer says, is "a modern deceptive expression for *petitio principii*." In fact, as Kant himself says with reference to his three postulates of practical reason: "I have to give up knowledge (*Wissen*) to make room for faith (*Glaube*)."

of the theologian and the metaphysician. Even these do not believe that other people's actions have no causes. For, if they did so, they should never try to influence other people's actions, as such influence necessarily implies that certain causes will produce certain actions. Every one acts on the assumption that it is possible to predict, with some degree of probability, how men will act under particular circumstances. To reject this would render impossible all intercourse between man and man. People suppose that a particular individual would, under particular circumstances, choose to act in a particular way, because they know from experience that he has acted in a similar way under similar circumstances, or because other individuals placed in similar circumstances have acted in a similar way. To suppose that similar circumstances are followed by similar choice is nothing less than admitting that circumstances determine choice, or that they are both determined by some common cause.

Were one's will free, it would not be possible to change one's character by education. But experience teaches that a man's character is composed of various qualities, and is changeable by certain lines of effort. Just because a man's will obeys motives and is dependent on causes, he can be made to transform himself by changing the environment of his activities and by thoughtfully regulating the motives of his will. As the Blessed one has said : "The Sramaṇas and Brahmaṇas, who say that ideas appear and disappear in man without cause or antecedent, are grievously deceived. . . . By education certain ideas arise while others are annulled."\*

A will trained in the right direction implies a necessary preparation of the heart by efforts of right desire (*bhāvanā*). A wish which is attainable is an act of will begun, and when it is strengthened, it makes the act of will complete. By the *asubha-bhāvanā* one creates in himself a disgust for all that is corrupt by reflecting on its evil consequences. This gives the necessary strength and courage to practise the other *bhāvanās*. In the *maitrī bhāvanā* one so adjusts his heart that he longs for the weal

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\* See *Dīgha-nikāya*, Vol. I, p. 180.

and welfare of all beings including the happiness even of his enemies. *Maitri*, as Emil Burnouf says, is nothing less than universal love. No one can cultivate *maitri*, unless his heart has been completely purified of all sensuality (*rāga*) and malevolence (*dvesha*). All means of acquiring religious merit, says the *Itivuttaka*, have not six-tenths of the value of *maitri*, the purification of the heart. The might of *maitri* is beyond all measure. It alone can confer all possible benefits. There is no good of life which is not a shade flung from *maitri*. In the *karuṇabhāvanā* one thinks of all beings in distress, vividly representing in his imagination their sorrows and anxieties so as to arouse for them a deep compassion in his heart. In the *muditabhāvanā* one desires the prosperity of others and rejoices in their welfare and joy. Even under the most trying circumstances, even when the greatest mishaps may occur, one ought never to give up *mudita*, for it is the one great source of perennial consolation. When *mudita* blooms, it manifests itself as a rage to suffer for mankind. In the *upekshabhāvanā* the aspirant, freed from pride and selfishness, rises above all ideas of power and oppression, wealth and want, fame and contempt, youth and age, beauty and ugliness, disease and health, and views with disinterested calmness and equanimity whatever may happen to him,

“ As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing ;  
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards  
Hast ta'en with equal thanks.”

It is only by efforts of this kind that man can acquire the capacity of determining himself in accordance with the laws of the good, instead of being the mere victim of external circumstances. Thus alone will he be able to annihilate all his evil dispositions and perturbations ; to get rid of all idea of separateness and difference ; to fill his mind with thoughts of universal compassion, friendliness and benevolence ; and attain the sublime freedom characteristic of *bodhi*. In this atmosphere of true freedom he will work for the benefit of all beings with indefatigable zeal without the least thought of indolence, for, as the *Dharmasamgiti* says, the *bodhisattva* has no other concern than securing the happiness of all beings.

By right effort the will is trained and controlled. But, as there can be no isolated feeling, willing, or thinking, independent of one another, right effort must be coupled with right thought (*smṛiti*). The mind must therefore be guided in the right direction. It is the mind that creates fears and sorrows, that develops good and bad *karma*. As the Blessed One has said, all penances and austerities will be of no avail even when practised for an extraordinarily long time, if the mind is not directed towards the right object. *Chittādhino dharma dharmādhino bodhihi*. On the mind depends the practice of dharma, and on the practice of dharma depends the attainment of *bodhi*. "The mind is the origin of all that is; the mind is the master; the mind is the cause. If in the mind there are evil thoughts, then the words are evil, the deeds are evil, and the sorrow which results from sin follows that man as the chariot wheel follows him who drags it. The mind is the origin of all that is; it is the mind that commands, it is the mind that contrives. If in the mind there are good thoughts, then the words are good and the deeds good, and the happiness which results from such conduct follows that man, as the shadow accompanies the substance. It is the mind that makes its own dwelling place; the mind reflecting on evil ways courts its own misery. It is the mind that creates its own sorrow. Not a father, not a mother can do so much; if only the thoughts be directed to that which is right, then happiness must necessarily follow. The wise man, who restrains his six appetites and guards his thoughts, shall certainly conquer in his struggle with evil, and free himself from all misery."

"Mind is the master-power that moulds and makes,  
And man is mind, and evermore he takes  
The tool of thought, and, shaping what he wills,  
Brings forth a thousand joys, a thousand ills :—  
He thinks in secret, and it comes to pass;  
Environment is but his looking glass."

Hence, the mind must be guarded from being affected by bad thoughts. Man must always practise right thought. He must know what ought to be avoided and what ought to be done. He must always be mindful as to how his body and mind are engaged. Only he who is capable of thought will see his sin to be sin and make amends for it as is meet and in future restrain himself

therefrom. The man devoid of thought is like an invalid incapable of doing work. The exercise of right thought can be possible only when one possesses intellectual insight and wisdom (*pragnā*). "Wisdom," says Buddhagosha in his *Visuddhi-magga*, "is manifold and various, and an answer that attempted to be exhaustive would both fail of its purpose and tend to still greater confusion. Therefore, we will confine ourselves to the meaning here intended,—wisdom is knowledge consisting in insight and conjoined with meritorious thoughts." By insight is meant the power to grasp the central realities of all that are most valuable to man. By knowledge is meant an adequate understanding of the law of cause and effect; of the real nature of body (*kāya*) and mind (*chitta*); of pleasure and pain (*vedana*); and of the true relations (*yathābhutam*) of all things (*dharma*) in the universe.\* Wisdom will lead the *bhoddhisattva* to perceive that all things come into existence by a combination of various circumstances (*hetupratyaya*); that all things are subject to change (*anitya*); that there is neither a personal ego soul (*ātman*) nor an unconditioned unknowable substrate in things (*ding an sich, brahmam, or paramātman*); and that through their ignorance of the true nature of things (*avidya*) all beings are experiencing mental and physical sufferings in numberless ways. This knowledge will awaken in the *bodhisattva* the deepest compassion for all suffering beings and impel him to work with dauntless energy for their salvation.

It is a glory of Buddhism that it makes intellectual enlightenment an essential condition of salvation. In Buddhism morality and intellectual enlightenment are inseparable from one another. While morality forms the basis of the higher life, knowledge and wisdom complete it. Without a perfect understanding of the law of casuality and transformation (*pratītyasamutpāda*), no one can aspire to attain *bodhi*, however moral he may be. No one can even be said to be truly moral, if he does not possess the necessary insight and knowledge. In this respect Buddhism differs from all other religions. All monotheistic religions start with certain assumptions, and when these assumptions are contradicted by the growth of knowledge, they bewail that "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." But Buddhism

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\* *Kāya, chitta, vedana* and *dharma* are called the *smṛtyupasthānas*,



arts with no assumptions. It stands on the firm rock of facts, and can therefore never shun the dry light of knowledge. Some have attempted to place the *advaita* form of Vedanta on the same level with the Dharma, as in the *advaita* religion the chief means of salvation is what is called *gnānam*. But the *gnānam* of the Vedantin is entirely different from what the Buddhist understands by *pragnā*. *Pragnā* means ratiocination based on observation and experience, and as such has nothing to do with intuition or what is called superconsciousness. On the other hand, "the inherer of Brahman defines the nature of the cause and so on, on the basis of scripture, and is, therefore, not obliged to render his tenets throughout conformable to observation." It is only on the authority of the Veda that Brahman is taken as the cause of the origin of the world. In his *System des Vedānta* Dr. Deussen especially emphasises the fact that the so-called *gnānam* (*metaphysische Erkenntniss*) of the Vedantin is not different from the faith (*Glaube*) of the Christian.

Though knowledge and insight are of the highest value, yet they must be prevented from leading to a fluctuating mood of mind. Hence, side by side with *pragnā*, the aspirant for bodhi must also practice *dhyāna* to attain tranquillity, a state of mind of restfulness and moral insight. Right peace (*samādhi, samāntarābhāva*) alone will bring to a standstill all mental states which produce frivolous sophistries. *Dhyāna*, as understood in Buddhism, is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view, and as such plays an important part. The Dharma discards prayer as a means of attaining salvation. How can the law of cause and effect be influenced by the supplications of defaulters? The consequences of a fault can only be removed by due repentance and reparation inspired, not by the selfish fear of punishment, but by the love of truth and righteousness. But contemplation, under the necessary moral conditions, coupled with sufficient knowledge for directing it to profit, will enable one to know himself better, to examine his conscience more minutely, and to purify his mind. *Dhyāna* comprises four stages: a stage of sadness and joy born of seclusion accompanied by investigation and reflection; a state of elation and internal calm without reasoning, consequent on investigation and reflection; the total absence of all passion and prejudice; and, lastly, a state of self-

possession and complete tranquillity. The *Chandradipa-Samādhi Sutra* (quoted by Rev. Soyen Shaku in his *Sermons of a Buddhist Abbot*) enumerates the benefits of practising *dhyāna* as follows: “(1) When a man practises *dhyāna* according to the regulation, all his senses become calm and serene, and, without knowing it on his part, he begins to enjoy the habit. (2) Loving kindness will take possession of his heart, which, then freeing itself from sinfulness, looks upon all sentient beings as his brothers and sisters. (3) Such poisonous and harassing passions as anger, infatuation, avarice, etc., gradually retire from the field of consciousness. (4) Having a close watch over all the senses, *dhyāna* guards them against the intrusion of evils. (5) Being pure in heart and serene in disposition, the practiser of *dhyāna* feels no inordinate appetite in lower passions. (6) The mind being concentrated on higher thoughts, all sorts of temptation and attachment and egotism are kept away. (7) Though he well knows the emptiness of vanity, he does not fall into the snare of nihilism. (8) However entangling the nets of birth and death, he is well aware of the way to deliverance therefrom. (9) Having fathomed the deepest depths of the Dharma, he abidest in the wisdom of the Buddha. (10) As he is not disturbed by any temptation, he feels like an eagle that, having escaped from imprisonment, freely wings his flight through the air.” It is, therefore, clear that *dhyāna* is a discipline of the mind which leads finally to a state in which the mind is flooded by an illumination which reveals the universe in a new aspect absolutely free from all traces of interest, affection or passion.

*Dhyāna*, as practised by the Buddhist, is not losing consciousness. It is, on the other hand, the subjective way of developing the habitual mode of one's consciousness, known as character. The practice of *dāna* and *śīla*, that is, the doing of good actions, consists in certain external acts of daily life, whereby the lower reflexes are gradually eliminated and the higher ones developed, whereas *dhyāna*, though it implies the practice of *dāna* and *śīla*, involves the direct action of thought and volition on the character. It is thus a self-possessed purposive eradication of egotism with a view to investigate all things dispassionately. It is a strenuous endeavour to bring the mind into perfect harmony with all that exists, to see the place of everything in nature and adjust one's actions righteously towards them. *Dhyāna* has, therefore, nothing

in common with ecstasy or trance, which is found so largely associated with religious mysticism and is claimed to afford supernatural powers and insight into the divine. "No member of our community," says the Blessed One, "may ever arrogate to himself extraordinary gifts or supernatural perfection, through vain glory give himself out to be a holy man; such, for instance, as to withdraw into solitary places on pretence of enjoying ecstasies and afterwards presume to teach others the way to uncommon spiritual attainments. Sooner may the lofty palm-tree that has been cut down become green again, than an elect guilty of such pride be restored to his holy station. Take care for yourself that you do not give way to such an excess." Dreams and ecstasies, visions and trances, which are the very proof of holiness in other religions, are vain and foolish imaginings to the Buddhist.

The Buddhist *dhyāna*, sometimes called *anuttarayoga*, should not be confounded with the Brahmanical *yoga*. The latter is predominantly physical and hypnotic, being a pathological disturbance arising from a subjective self-illusion. The former also has its physical and hygienic side. He who would seek perfection must carefully observe all hygienic conditions. The rules of diet, the habit of deep breathing, and fresh air at all times, the wearing of proper clothing that does not impede the free passage of air over the body, the habit of frequent bathing, regular rest, and a sufficient amount of exercise—all are essential. Though *dhyāna* may have its physical and hygienic side, it is predominantly intellectual and ethical, its chief purpose being to understand the true nature of consciousness and therefore of man. The *yogin par excellence* in Buddhism is the generous *bodhisattva* who practises the six *pāramitās*. While the Brāhman *yogi* endeavours to become absorbed in the universal *Brahman*, the *bodhisattva* attempts to realise by contemplation the self-devoid character of all things (*sarvadharma anupalambha cūnyatā*). *Cūnyatā karunayor abhinnaṃ bodhicittaṃ*. The mentality corresponding to *bodhi* is inseparable from universal compassion and the negation of a self. In his *Mahāyāna sradhotpāda sūtra* Asvaghosha specially warns the aspirant for *bodhi* against confounding the *saṃādhi* of the Buddhists with that of the *tīrthakās*, the heretics. All *saṃādhis* practised by the heretics are described as being invariably the production of the egoistic conception and hallucination and self-suggestion. And we may add that the most intense and so-called divine raptures are the results of the

unconscious activity of at least some of the organs of the sexual life.

The practice of *dhyaṇa*, uncoupled with *pragnā*, cannot be productive of any good, but when the two go hand in hand, the mind is freed not only from disquietude by the removal of all inconsistencies, but also from *ātmamoha*, the lust of self, which is the mother of all egoism. The destruction of egoism enables the *bodhisattva* to get rid of all sorrows and all obstacles to progress, to acquire self-control and fortitude, to feel compassion for all beings and to rejoice in doing good acts. It is no wonder that the Buddhist *dhyaṇa* has been able to produce such remarkable results as we observe in the modern Japanese. Says Mr. Okakura Yoshisaburo in his *Japanese Spirit*: "The self-control that enables us not to betray our inner feeling through a change in our expression, the measured steps with which we are taught to walk into the hideous jaws of death—in short, all those qualities which make a present Japanese of truly Japanese type look strange, if not queer, to your (*i.e.*, European) eyes, are in a most marked degree a product of that direct or indirect influence on our past mentality which was exercised by the Buddhist doctrine of *Dhyaṇa* as taught by the Zen priests."

In the way of those who traverse the Noble Path lie the ten impediments (*samyojana*) which must be overcome. The foremost among these is the delusion of a permanent individualised self (*satkāyadṛishti*). This delusion takes many forms. Sometimes the self is identified with the body; sometimes it is regarded as a thing that flies away from the body at death; sometimes it manifests itself in a sentimental or metaphysical clinging to individuality. All the same to one who considers himself a permanent immutable being, and does not realise that he is only a unity originating from an aggregation of *skandhas*, whose present condition has been determined by causes working in the past, and whose future will be determined by causes at work in the present, any progress in the direction of emancipation and enlightenment is impossible. But when once a man has realised that there is no permanent ego (*ātman*) which can gain an eternal paradise beyond the grave, the temptation is not far to run to the sensualist's extreme of "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Hence, it is necessary to have faith in the possibility of attaining perfection. Pyrrhonism (*vichikichchā*) is therefore the next obstacle in the path of the neophyte. With its shibboleths

of *Ignorabimus* and *Unknowable*, pyrrhonism denies all possibility of solving the problem of existence, and thus becomes a mental and moral malady which can only stultify all endeavour towards progress. Scepticism is often nothing more than a cloak in which ignorance masquerades. Scepticism is not an attitude of mind, but an internal maladjustment denoting psychic instability. Scepticism cannot regenerate men; it can only kill but not give life. Only faith in a new ideal will impel men to move forward in search of a new life. To see to what goal the Noble Path will lead, one must enter the Path. No doubt reasons can be urged for entering the Path. But one must trust oneself to the Path and follow it far to derive the enlightenment the Path alone can furnish.

The third obstacle is the belief in the efficacy of purificatory ceremonies and rites (*çilavrata parāmarsha*). The Vedic religion was purely ritualistic. He who makes the *soma* flow in abundance and whose hands are always full of butter is the pious man *par excellence*, and he who is penurious towards the gods is the reprobate man. In post-Vedic times ritualism became stronger, and religion was almost reduced to magic. The rites themselves were reduced to the rank of gods. Ritual observances were considered essential for man's well-being. The repetition of sacred texts came to be looked upon as a condition of salvation, and a single invocation of the name of a deity was believed to cancel a whole life of crime and iniquity. As the teachings of the Blessed One do not rest on any belief in gods, there is no place in the Dharma for a ritual. Rites and outward observances are mere sham supports, and can afford no emancipation from misery, even when there is the right spirit within. People who are punctilious in the observance of rites and ceremonies are not free from the *kleṣas* of lust, hatred and ignorance. If bathing in the Ganges could confer merit, then the fishermen should indeed be the most meritorious, not to speak of the fishes and other animals, which are day and night swimming in its waters.

The conquest of these three obstacles forms the first stage (*śrotāpanna*) of the Noble Path, whose fruit, as the *Dhammapāda* says, is "better than universal empire in this world, better than going to heaven, better than lordship over all worlds." Success in the first stage is no guarantee of no lapse back into the old ways. The man who has overcome the delusion of self, doubt and ritualism has to a large extent rectified himself, but not till he has broken the next two fetters of sensuality (*kāma*) and

malevolence (*pratigha*) are his chances of falling back reduced to a minimum. When he has overcome these two impediments to a great extent, he attains to the second stage and becomes *satkriḍāgāmin*. He will then walk in the right path, but he is not free from the danger of falling back. Only when all sensuality and malevolence are destroyed, there can no longer arise in his heart the least love of self or ill-feeling towards others, and then he becomes *anāgāmin*. There is now no possibility of his going backward, but he is not yet free from all error. He has still to overcome the remaining impediments. He has to destroy all craving (*rāga*) for material (*rūpa*) and immaterial (*arūpa*) pleasures in this world or another world ; he must overcome pride (*mana*), self-righteousness (*ouddatya*), and the ignorance of the true nature of things (*avidyā*). When he has burst all these fetters and freely traversed the Noble Path, then all things appear to him in their true relations. Having no evil desires, he cherishes right desires for himself, and feels tender and disinterested love for all beings. Having traversed the path he reaches the goal ; he becomes perfect, an *arhat*, and attains the blessedness of Nirvāṇa. He who has attained supreme enlightenment no longer looks upon the world (*prapañcha*) with contempt, but sees that it is the land of bliss, where pervades the serene light of *bodhi*.

The career of an aspirant to Buddhahood, which is represented by the Noble Eightfold Path, has been elaborated by some leading Buddhist thinkers into ten *bhumis* or stages. When one's intentions and aspirations have become purified by the inception of the thought of bodhi (*chittotpāda*) and they find living expression in compassion and charity, he cannot but be joyful. This is the first stage, known as the joyful stage (*pramuditā*) ; it represents the happy state of the newly converted. It is the domain of charity, a sphere easily accessible to all. The insight gained in the first stage must be developed by pursuing the several good paths of action so as to render the heart thoroughly spotless and free the mind from the conception of the ego. Where belief in the ego exists, one cannot prefer one's neighbour to oneself. One may perhaps do so in a moment of exaltation but not permanently. The recognition of *gunyatā* and the explanation of the world to which it leads purifies and enlarges the aspirant's compassionate disposition. This is the second or immaculate (*vimalā*) stage, which is essentially the domain of morality. The practice of morality must be coupled with reflection (*adhichitta*) ; hence the bodhisattva must engage himself in the various *bhāvanās*

so as to annihilate desire, anger, hatred and error, and fortify oneself in faith, compassion, goodwill, generosity and disinterestedness. This is the third or shining (*prabhākarī*) stage, in which the seeker after Buddhahood 'shines' by patience and forbearance. In order to completely surrender the idea of mine, the bodhisattva must perfect himself in good works, intellectual and moral, and especially apply himself to the cultivation of the several virtues connected with bodhi (*bhōdhipakṣadharmā*). This is the fourth or radiant (*archishmati*) stage, and is the domain of energy (*virya*), by the putting forth of which alone good works can be perfected. Now the bodhisattva, being safe from bad thoughts, puts himself to a course of study and meditation in order to understand the Four Noble Truths in their true light. This is the fifth or invincible (*sudurjayā*) stage, in which *dhyāna* and *samādhi* predominate. The practice of charity, morality, patience, etc., prepares the mind for the thorough mastery of the profound principles of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) and of the substratelessness of all things (*ṣuṇyatā*), which are the principles that give meaning to all other teaching. The mind of the aspirant is now turned towards these principles which constitute the very essence of Buddhahood. This stage is therefore called the 'turned towards' (*abhimukhī*) stage, and is the domain in which *pragnā* reigns. Though the bodhisattva abides in the principles of *pratītyasamutpāda*, *nairatmya* and *ṣuṇyatā*, yet he cannot be said to have escaped completely from the domain of passion. He is not subject to passion in the sense that any passion whatever would work in him, but he is not completely free from passion, as he has still the intense desire of becoming a Buddha and his intentions for the salvation of all mankind are not fulfilled. He therefore devotes himself to the attainment of that knowledge which would enable him to produce various means or expedients suitable for universal salvation. This is the seventh stage, called far-going (*dūramgamā*), which sums up the six preceding stages and includes especially the fruits of the sixth, the full development of the intelligence of the bodhisattva, the complete absence of regard for the particular, and the constant cherishing of the thought of annihilation (*nirodhasamāpatti*) of individuality. When the bodhisattva has freed himself from eager desire for all particulars (*nimittagrahaṇa*) and does not direct his thoughts on

special objects (*ābhoga*), he becomes immovable (*achalā*). This is the eighth stage, whose special feature is the domineering presence of that supreme virtue, known as the *anutpattika dharmakṣaṭṣhu*, of seeing that all things are such as they are and have not been created for any special purpose. The actions of the bodhisattva, whether of body, or of voice, or of mind, are all compassionate and beneficent, but they are in no way tainted by the idea of self, all idea of duality, of mine and thine, having vanished. Though all thought of self has been annihilated, the bodhisattva is not content with tranquil deliverance, but becomes enthusiastic in his devotion to the teaching of the Dharma to others with a view to ripen their merits. This is the ninth stage, the stage of the good ones (*sādhumati*). The bodhisattva has now become worthy of the royalty of the Dharma. Having received the excellent rain of the Dharma, he himself becomes a 'cloud of the Dharma' (*dharmameghā*), and in this final tenth stage, the bodhisattva has become a Tathāgata, and continues to shed upon creatures the good rain which lays the dust of passions and causes the growth of the harvest of merits.

It is an accusation often made against Buddhism that, by placing the goal of life in the attainment of perfection through enlightenment, it tends to make the cultivation of the intellectual powers of greater importance than the acquirement of the ethical virtues. To one who has carefully considered the various qualifications needed for the pilgrimage on the path of purity nothing can be more baseless and absurd than this charge. Such a charge might hold good against the Vedānta, but not against the Dharma. In the Vedānta the perfected sage is subject to no moral law. Anandagiri tells us that Saṅkara drank toddy and projected his soul into the corpse of a king to learn the erotic arts. We are told in the *Bhāgavata purāṇa* that the transgressions of virtue observed in such superior beings as Krishna must not be regarded as faults, for they can have no moral restraints. In the *Vishnu purāṇa*, while speaking of the jewel *syamantaka*, whose presence is supposed to be of advantage to a whole kingdom, Krishna says : " This jewel should be taken charge of by a person who leads a life of perpetual continence ; if worn by an impure individual, it will be the cause of his death. Now, as I have sixteen thousand wives, I am not qualified to have the care of it. It is not likely that Satyabhāma will agree to the conditions that



would entitle her to the possession of the jewel; and as to Balabhadra, he is too much addicted to wine and the pleasures of sense to lead a life of self-denial. We are therefore out of the question." On the other hand, in Buddhism obedience to the laws of morality is the primary condition that must be fulfilled before the mind can become the fit receptacle of truth. The *Bodhicharyāvatāra* says: "The *pāramitās* of *dāna*, *śīla*, *kṣānti*, *vīrya*, *prajñā* and *dhyāna* are in the ascending order of importance, so that one may neglect the lower *pāramitās* for the higher; but for the sake of *śīla* one may even forgo the higher as *śīla* forms the foundation of all good acts." In his *Suhrillekha* Nāgārjuna says that "morality is the supporting ground of all eminence, as the earth is of the moving and the immovable." To King Prasenajit said the Master: "Learning need not be much, conduct is the first thing. This Pratisena has allowed the secret virtue of the words of this one Gāthā to penetrate his spirit; his body, speech and thought are under perfect control; for, though a man know ever so much, if his knowledge reach not to his life to deliver him from the power which leads to destruction, what benefit can all his learning be? To understand one truth, and, understanding it, to act accordingly, this is to find deliverance." In ultimate analysis the *bodhicitta*, the cast of mind of the man who has attained bodhi, resolves itself into two essential virtues, which are identical in aim, and whose acquisition forms the double duty of the *bodhisattva*. These virtues are *prajñāpāramitā*, knowledge and insight, and *śīlapāramitā*, morality. All the other *pāramitās* proceed from these two as their sources. At the commencement the one is complementary to the other, but in the last stage the two become identical. Till their unification morality is a means to attain enlightenment, but morality alone does not constitute enlightenment. To lead the higher life intellectual illumination is absolutely necessary, but it cannot be obtained except by a previous discipline in charity, morality, and forbearance. The abstract theoretical view of the nothingness of the ego (*pudgalanairātmya*) and the substratelessness of things (*anālambanā*) cannot destroy the illusion which makes one believe in the reality of the ego and of the non-ego, unless the growing exercise of charity teaches him to sacrifice his goods, his body, and even his life. But true altruism, genuine benevolence, sincere charity imply also liberality of intelligence and enlightened understanding. The

acquisition of wisdom (*gnānā sambhāra*) necessarily presupposes the presence of compassion, devotion, and morality (*punya sambhāra*). As the Blessed One has said :

“ Virtue is the base on which the man who is wise,  
Can train his mind and make his wisdom grow,  
Thus shall the strenuous *bhikṣu* undeceived,  
Unravel the tangled skein of life.”

“ This is the base like great earth to man  
And this is the root of all increase in goodness,  
The starting point of all the Buddha’s teaching  
Virtue, to wit, on which true bliss depends.”

## CHAPTER X

### THE RIDDLE OF THE WORLD

“**K**ARMAJAM loka vaichitryam.” All things are born of activities. Everything is in a state of continual transformation. “*No cha nirodhosti na cha bhāvosti sarvadā : ajātam aniruddham cha tasmād sarvam idam jagat.*” There is neither creation nor destruction ; there is neither beginning nor end. “*Vichāreṇa nāsti kim chid ahetutah.*” Yet nothing happens without cause and reason. “*Svatantram na vidyate . . . Evam paravaṇam sarvam yadvaṇam sopi cāvaṇah.*” Nothing exists which is autonomous. Everything depends upon another, and this other thing on which it depends is itself dependent.

Every change is determined by a number of conditions. The most striking of these conditions is ordinarily called its cause, and the change itself is said to be the effect of that cause. Strictly speaking the cause (*pratyaya*) of any change is the totality of all the conditions needed for its occurrence. That in the cause which makes the effect possible is spoken of as the reason (*hētu*) of the change. When a seed changes into a plant, that in the seed which makes it become a plant of a particular kind is the reason of the change, while the totality of conditions, such as the soil, water, light, air, space, needed for its germination and growth, constitutes the cause. Similarly sentiency, the germ of consciousness (*vignāna bījam*), is the reason for the development of individuality (*nāma rupa*), while the union of parents, the womb of the mother, the potentialities derived from parents, vegetative and animal activities, and the environment constitute the causes that produce a particular individuality.

No change occurs by itself. Every change stands in the relation of cause to some other change, and in the relation of an effect to a third change. All changes in the world depend more or less upon one another. This causal nexus, which is found everywhere in experience, is called in the Dharma by the technical name of *pratītya samutpāda*. A correct understanding of this dependent origination, of the conditioned nature of all existence which has neither beginning nor end, is of the greatest importance in Buddhism. “*Pratītya samutpādam paṇyanti te dharmam paṇyanti ; yo dharmam paṇyati sa buddham paṇyati.*”

He who has understood the chain of causation has understood the inner meaning of the Dharma, and he that has grasped the Dharma has perceived the essence of Buddhahood.

If every change has a cause, and that cause again a cause, is there then no ultimate unchangeable or first cause? Replies the Blessed One in *Samyuttaka Nikāya*: "If a man should gather all the grasses and herbs, twigs and leaves of this vast continent of India, and arrange them in heaps, saying: This is my mother, this is the mother of my mother, and so on, there would be no end seen to the mother of mother of this man, even though he might reach the end of all the grasses and herbs, twigs and leaves of this continent of India. What is the reason of this? Without beginning and end is this world-process (*samsāra*)."  
 Again in another place in the same *Nikāya* the Buddha says: "A fruit does not originate of itself nor is it made by another; it originates in virtue of a cause; it ceases on the cessation of the cause." There can be no first cause. In experience we find no absolute beginning. We come across no change instituting a series of changes, which has not itself been preceded by some other change. The question of cause never even arises except where there is change, and the cause demanded is always another change. Hence, it is meaningless to speak of a first cause. Science knows nothing of first causes. There is no branch of rational investigation from which they can be inferred. Wherever we find the existence of a first cause asserted, we find we have reached a temporary limit to knowledge, or that we are inferring something outside the limits of sense experience, where knowledge and inference are meaningless. As Prof. A. Riehl says in his *Philosophische Kritikismus*, "a first cause with which as a creative act the series of changes should have begun originally, would be an uncaused change. The necessity of conceiving every change as effect which has its cause in a preceding change makes such an uncaused change absolutely unthinkable." *Pratītya samutpāda* has, therefore, neither commencement nor end; it flows uninterrupted like the waters of a river. It has no lord presiding over it (*asvāmīkam*) and it is free from all forms of animism (*anātmakam*).

Is there then no *Iṣvara*? In a conversation with *Anāthapindika* the Blessed One argued the matter as follows. "If the world had been made by *Iṣvara*, there should be no change nor destruction, there should be no such thing as sorrow or calamity, as right or wrong, as all things, pure and impure, must come from him. If sorrow and joy, love and hate, which spring up in all

conscious beings, be the work of Iṣvara, he himself must be capable of sorrow and joy, love and hatred, and if he has these, how can he be said to be perfect? If Iṣvara be the maker, and if all beings have to submit silently to their maker's power, what would be the utility of practising virtue? The doing of right or wrong would be the same, as all deeds are his making and must be the same with their maker. But if sorrow and suffering are attributed to another cause, then there would be something of which Iṣvara is not the cause. Why, then, should not all that exists be uncaused too? Again, if Iṣvara be the maker, he acts with or without a purpose. If he acts with a purpose, he cannot be said to be all perfect, for a purpose necessarily implies the satisfaction of a want. If he acts without a purpose, he must be like the lunatic or suckling babe. Besides, if Iṣvara be the maker, why should not people reverently submit to him, why should they offer supplications to him when sorely pressed by necessity? And why should people adore more gods than one? Thus the idea of Iṣvara is proved false by rational argument, and all such contradictory assertions should be exposed." (Asvaghosha's *Buddhacharita*). "If, as theists say, God is too great for man to be able to comprehend him, then it follows that his qualities also surpass our range of thought, and that we can neither know him nor attribute to him the quality of a creator" (*Bodhicharyāvatāra*). When a thing is defined as unique in character, every basis upon which to argue is removed.

Is not the world in which we live, it is asked, an orderly world where everything is governed by law? Do not laws imply a law-giver? "Who sharpened the thorn? Who gave their varied forms, colours, and habits to the deer kinds, and to the birds? *Svabhāvā*! It is not according to the will (*icchā*) of any; and if there be no desire or intention, there can be no intender or designer" (*Buddhacharita*). All the order which exists in the world arises from the simple fact that, when there are no disturbing causes, things remain the same. The observed grouping of things and sequence of events we speak of as the order of the world, and this is the same as saying that the world is as it is and no more. As the poet says,

"Nature's order is but the rhyme  
 Whereto in holiest unanimity  
 All things with all things move unfalteringly  
 Infolded and communal from their prime."

No natural law is the cause of the observed sequence in nature. Every natural law merely describes the conditions on which a particular change is dependent. A body falls to the ground not in consequence of the law of gravitation, but the law of gravitation is the precise statement of what happens when a body is left unsupported. A law of nature does not command that something shall take place, but it merely states how something happens. While a civil law is a prescription involving a command and a duty, a natural law is simply a description, in which is formulated the repeated sequence of perceptions. As Prof. Karl Pearson says, "law in the scientific sense is essentially a product of the human mind and has no meaning apart from man. There is more meaning in the statement that man gives laws to nature than in its converse that nature gives laws to man." When a law has been found to be true in all known cases, we naturally expect that it would apply to cases that might hereafter come to our knowledge. The greater the number of cases in which a law has been observed to hold good, the greater is the probability that it is universally true. If the sun has risen daily without fail during the last 5,000 years ( $=1,826,213$  days), the odds in favour of its rising to-morrow are 1,826,214 to 1, and this amounts to saying that the rising of the sun to-morrow is practically certain. Thus every natural law represents a limitation of our thoughts, of our expectations. The more closely our thoughts are adapted to the sense-given facts, the greater are the restraints to the possibilities of our thinking, and stronger is the instinctive tendency to expect an event to happen in exactly the same manner as before. It is only in this sense that we speak of the uniformity of nature. We can only say that the laws of nature are practically universal, but not theoretically so. This practical certainty is all that man is capable of obtaining, and this is enough to serve him as a guide in life. Theoretical certainty would imply perfect and infinite knowledge, but this evidently is beyond man's capacities. All attempts to go far beyond the region of experience, whether it be in time or in space, must be affected with the greatest insecurity, because the probability of the results is nil.

This so-called teleological argument for the existence of *Içvara* often takes another form. From certain relations observed between the parts of organisms, it is inferred that they have been designed to serve a definite purpose. The eye, it is imagined, has been made for the purpose of seeing, just as a watch is constructed to show the hour. But in drawing this inference they are applying

analogy to a region far beyond the limits of experience, and the conclusion must accordingly be "infinitely precarious," that is to say, can have no element of probability connected with it. Further, the idea of purpose, as has been pointed out by Kant, is not a principle of the knowledge of nature, but a mode in which the human mind judges of certain organic forms. Just as man gives laws to nature, so man thinks the organising character of nature as analogous to causality aiming at ends. But this cannot be presumed to offer an explanation, just as no scientific law can account for any natural phenomenon. Just as law in the scientific sense is a product of the human mind and has no meaning apart from man, so the end is merely a point of view which arises from man's reflection about organic forms, and not a principle according to which they have been created. Properly speaking, teleology belongs only to the description of nature, and can give no valid conclusion as to the origin and inner possibility of organic forms. If one should ask whether material bodies could apply geometrical calculations to themselves, if material bodies could be the joint artists of their own combinations, we can only answer that under such and such conditions they do behave in such and such a way. Beyond this we know nothing. If we could penetrate into the intimate nature of bodies, we might clearly see that natural beings could not admit of any other disposition than what they possess at present. Because the facts of this world can be conveniently described in some special fashion, does it follow that the world has been designed by Içvara? Because one finds a wound on one's body, does it follow that it has been inflicted by Hotchli Potchli with a Rimbo Rambo? All that we could infer from the condition of the world is that there must be a cause. But the necessity of thought which compels us to affirm that the world had a cause compels us to postulate a cause of that cause, and so on *ad infinitum*, a first cause being, as we have already seen, even unthinkable.

If the heavens above do not declare the glory of Içvara, does not the moral law within derive its sanction from the belief that Içvara has ordained it, and that he will distribute to men, according to their deeds, rewards and punishments in a life beyond the grave? No doubt the observance of the laws of morality is of supreme importance to mankind, but it has nothing to do with the belief either in a future life or in Içvara. He who thinks that this world would be a worthless place without immortality is on the same level as the child who thinks that "grown up" life to be

worth having must be a life of continual play and no work. Nor can one be called truly moral who does not think it worth his while to be virtuous, unless he can look forward to remuneration hereafter for not having lived like a beast. Again, what connection can morality have with the belief in *Içvara*? Morality finds its authority and sanction not in illusions, threats, or hypothetical promises, but in the realities of life. It has sprung from those human relationships in which the individual finds himself compelled to live and act. It has its roots in the individual's needs, both physical and mental, which other human beings can satisfy, and in the sympathies which answer to those needs. Candid observation proves that man is fundamentally an emotional and volitional being, whose instinctive feelings and actions, originally sense-aroused and sense-guided, have become gradually enlightened and directed by developing reason. And it seems pretty clear that the emotional and volitional root (*kuçala mūla*) of what we hold to be most precious in life is to be found in those instinctive affections that bind together the lives of kindred beings. "Even in their purely instinctive origin these affections are fundamentally and essentially altruistic. However ravenous and lustful, even to revelling in hot blood and the tearing of palpitating flesh, tiger-like voluptuousness may dwell in beast and man, surely the affectionate solicitude of the tigress for her cubs is essentially devoted to their well-being, and not a mere pleasurable gratification of her own appetites. Nor are the carresses of the mates mere expressions of self-regarding passions. They unmistakably betoken affectionate consideration for each other; a sympathetic community of needs, grounded in the fact that, though different individuals, they are in verity bearers of complemental lives."

That man should be truthful, just, merciful, loving and kind to his neighbours, that he should avoid vice and practise virtue, are injunctions that obtain their validity, not because there is *Içvara*, but because human society would become impossible if they were set at nought. As Nagasena says to King Menander: "Vice, by reason of its meanness, dies quickly away, whereas virtue, by reason of its grandeur, takes a long time to die. By its meanness vice affects only the doer, but by its grandeur virtue overspreads the whole world. Whosoever lives in righteousness becomes filled with a sweet sense of trust and bliss, and bliss ruling in his heart makes his goodness grow more and more abundantly." Good action, to use the language of W. K. Clifford,



is that which makes the organic more organic. Virtue possesses a self-propagating power. Vice and wrong are ever destroying themselves. The more single-eyed selfishness is, the more it destroys itself. By a necessary contradiction egoism which aims at the destruction of others leads to the unconscious destruction of self. In seeking to increase life, make it richer and more happy, egoism really diminishes, impoverishes and annihilates it. Sympathy and love are rooted in the same natural bonds which have conditioned the very continuance of the race on the faithful discharge of their duties to others besides themselves.

It is an assumption not warranted by history and psychology that man, so far as he acts rationally, has his own individual pleasure as his conscious aim to the exclusion of what is for the interest of others. As far as we are able to penetrate into pre-historic times, man has been found to be a gregarious being, who could not have maintained himself except by the instincts of sympathy, the feeling of solidarity, and a certain degree of unselfishness, which are all presupposed in life in a community. Man is man only by living in and sharing the life of a society of his fellows. A human being in isolation would be no human being at all. As Aristotle has said, the man who could live without society must either be a beast or a god. It is in virtue of the solidarity of society the individual enters into the inheritance of all the past. Through social bond and effort man has been able to subdue the earth and make it his servant. Through social life man has come to regard himself as the crown and sum of things. By association man has made physical forces fetch and carry for him, utilized the winds as his messengers, and harnessed the lightning to his carriage. All achievements of man have been brought about by social solidarity. It may indeed be true that every achievement of man originated in the thought of a solitary mind, and then became the common property of many minds. Yet the thought would never have occurred to the solitary thinker, had he not been previously made the heir to the great tradition of the ages and prepared to think through his social environment. This fact refutes the idea which persists in so many quarters that man is naturally egoistic, and altruistic only in a secondary and fictitious fashion. Only as a member of society and by the observance of ethical laws can man enjoy the highest and most durable bliss.

He must be a monster or a savage, if not a criminal, who will dare to say that, if there be no Içvara, it is right or permissible

for any man, apart from the terrors of civil or criminal law, to commit murder, theft and adultery as freely as he pleases. On the other hand, the moral character of Içvara varies with the ethical standards of his worshippers. The moral import of one's ideas of Içvara springs from one's notions of morality. As man advances to higher stages of morality his earlier conceptions of the moral character of Içvara no longer satisfy him, and are accordingly criticised and reconstructed to meet the demand of his new ideals. The religious mind is incapable of expressing its relations to Içvara in any other way than by attributing to him a nature similar to its own. Man simply sees himself, his form, his human form, his reason and love, the best that he has and knows, projected on to the clouds. The history of religious thought amply proves this. Hence, instead of saying that Içvara is the creator of the world, we ought to say that man has created his idea of Içvara including all its moral elements. As Xenophanes said, if lions could picture a god, they would picture him in the form of a lion; the horses like a horse; the oxen like an ox.

"In all ages and climes man creates his gods,  
And makes them utter such revelations  
As bespeak his growth and mental vision.  
As the germs of goodness and love unfold,  
Man's noblest fancy, a loving deity,  
Takes shape, and sways his life for right and wrong."

How can we deny the existence of Içvara, when most people who have existed heretofore have believed in a god of some sort? When we examine this argument *ex consensu gentium*, we easily see its hollowness. Granting that the existence of Içvara is a matter of general belief, does it establish any probability that Içvara exists? It cannot, for many things, now admitted to be errors, have in the past been matters of general belief. Such, for example, is the belief that the sun went round the earth. Ignorance of science and fallacious reasoning have in the past been the main props of the belief in Içvara. With the growth of scientific knowledge and the recognition of the fallacies underlying natural theology, the belief in Içvara is becoming less general. Again, though there may be a widespread belief in Içvara, Içvara does not mean the same thing for all. Just consider the phases through which the idea of God has passed in the developmental history of such a small people as the Jews. The God of Samuel orders the slaughter of infants, but the tender mercies of the God of the Psalmist are over all his works. The

God of the Patriarchs is always repenting, while the God of the Apostles is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever without any variableness or shadow of turning. The God of the Old Testament walks in the garden in the cool of the day, but the God of the New Testament cannot be seen by man. The God of Leviticus is punctilious about the sacrificial furniture and utensils, but the God of the Acts cannot dwell in temples. The God of Exodus is merciful only to those who love him, whereas the God of Jesus is kind unto the unthankful and the evil. Not only has the idea of God been different at different times with one and the same people, but it has never been the same for any two persons. No wonder that Wesley told Whitefield : " Your God is my devil ! " Temperament, training, surroundings are determinative factors in an individual's idea of God. At best the argument from general belief can only prove that in worshipping Içvara a man only yearns towards his utmost possible conception as regards the unknown. This is well illustrated by the fact that the most ignorant of mankind have the most concrete idea of God, who is to them one like themselves, with immensely magnified powers, whereas the more cultured a man is and the more facts he knows, the less definite is his idea of God. The savage sees his gods in stocks and stones. The philosopher considers a god comprehended as no God. The mystic calls God " a Not of all the things which man can think or say."

" There is in God, the seer feels,  
A deep but dazzling darkness."

In some quarters attempts have been made to find a psychological basis for the belief in Içvara. No doubt psychology can tell us something about the so-called religious experience, which consists in certain aspirations, emotions and perhaps a consciousness of satisfaction. The reality of such experiences need not be called in question ; they may be psychological facts. But we doubt their validity in furnishing evidence as to the existence of a being who is supposed to be in communion with those that undergo the religious experiences. The existence of such a being is not a matter of direct experience, but a matter of inference, about which the person undergoing the experience can himself or herself be in doubt. The psychology of religious experience proves beyond doubt how the experience varies with the character of the intellectual theory connected with it. The theoretical belief may be the cause or the effect of the religious experience,

but it is inseparably connected with it. A person's intellectual presuppositions or view of the universe determine the character of his or her religious experiences. If one disbelieves in the existence of an *Içvara*, he cannot have experience of communion with such a being. Hence, as Dr. Hastings Rashdall puts it in his *Philosophy and Religion*, "the idea of a religion which is merely based upon psychology and involves nothing else is a delusion." Psychology cannot tell us whether a certain belief is true or false. To ascertain the truth of a belief reason is the only means and by reasoning, even the most elaborate, the existence of an *Içvara* cannot be substantiated.

The so-called historical proofs for the existence of *Içvara* are from their nature fallacious. What they attempt to establish is the existence of miracles. If by a miracle is meant an event which had no natural cause, history cannot accept such events. For all historical evidence rests on inferences from effect to cause, and we can infer from effect to cause only on the assumption that we can find the complete cause of events in nature itself. Were miracles possible, we should never be able to say that a particular event was the cause of any other. Hence no historical proofs can ever establish that an event, which happened, was in reality a miracle. But if by miracle is meant only a great and wonderful work, then a man's ability to perform astonishing feats does not prove that he knows the truth, or tells it. Apart from miracles historical proofs can only show that somebody said something, but they cannot establish the truth of his statements, which has to be tested on quite other grounds. Hence, neither history nor science can apodeictically establish the existence of *Içvara*. As Prof. W. James says in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, "all arguments for God but follow the combined suggestions of the facts and of our feelings. They prove nothing rigorously. They only corroborate our pre-existent partialities. . . . If you have a god already whom you believe in, these arguments confirm you. If you are atheistic, they fail to set you right." Rightly did John Henry Newman hold that apart from an interior and unreasoned blind faith (the so-called *illative sense*) there was no cogent proof of the existence of God.

In recent years some thinkers have attempted to prop up the belief in *Içvara* from the point of view of pragmatism. According to pragmatism the truth of an idea or a proposition does not consist in its agreement with any existing reality, but in the possibility of verification, that is to say, in its usefulness for

practical life. Truths may be divided into two classes. In one of these, which may be called direct truths, the process of verification is going on daily. Thus the truth of the ideas a man has of the streets in his neighbourhood he verifies daily, as it is by means of these ideas he finds his way daily to the different places to which he has to go. On the other hand, there are in his head many ideas and thoughts, which he cannot so directly verify nor even verify at all nor whose verification can have any interest for him. For example, that the North pole is completely capped with ice is a truth he accepts, but which he has absolutely no means of verification. To the acceptance of this truth he comes by a number of intermediate stages or propositions, which have no special practical value in life. Truths of this class may be said to be indirect. Indirect truths are not necessarily superfluous for life, they may often furnish motives to action, but for practical life the direct truths are the chief incentives. The intermediate links by which we arrive at indirect truths may involve meaningless nonsense, such as devils, ghosts, astral bodies, etc., but mankind are not thereby harmed. The reason of this is evident. Man possesses a large store of direct truths which are sufficient for life and false convictions, owing to their indirectness, exert but little influence on practical life. Thus, there are many people who have the conviction that there is an *Içvara* dwelling somewhere above the clouds who sways the destiny of each one of us and directs it to the best. Nevertheless, these always act as if they had no such conviction. This shows that this so-called "truth" has no influence on their life, but that they call to their aid the direct truths which stand in exact opposition to that truth. The falsity of the idea of an *Içvara* who is concerned about the welfare of all becomes evident, when during illness people resort to prayers instead of a doctor and bring on themselves dire results. So long as we make no practical use of those convictions which we have not verified, they do us no harm, and they influence our practical life, only when they have certain verified truths as their last links. Hence the pragmatic method of proof cannot be regarded as valid for all convictions but only for direct truths.

Religious convictions, such as the belief in God, soul, heaven, hell, predestination, are mostly indirect. But they often involve intermediate links which tend to bring them into direct connection with life. The presence of such directly verified links enable religious convictions to bring about beneficial results. If, however,

we attempt to translate them directly into practical life, much harm may be produced. For example, the doctrine of *karma* may indirectly produce much good in offering consolation in adversity and suffering. But when introduced directly into life it produces shocking results, with which those in India are familiar when an epidemic breaks out. So long as convictions affect life only indirectly, we cannot take their consequences as criteria in the estimation of their truth, since the nature of the results they produce vary with the intermediate links. Therefore, when we take the result of a conviction as the criterion of its certitude, it is essential to know whether the result is direct or indirect. As in indirect truths there is a possibility of great divergences in the intermediate links, indirect consequences cannot serve as proof. The pragmatic upholders of religious convictions do not lay sufficient stress upon this difference. The belief in God, *karma*, hell, or heaven, have produced both good and bad results. What then do these prove decisively? Is the belief in *Içvara* then true or false? We cannot take into consideration those indirect results where the belief in God has afforded consolation and encouragement, as such experiences are purely subjective, but when we try to estimate the belief by the objective results of its direct action on life we always find it leading to a blind harmful fatalism.\*

If the world has not been created by *Içvara*, may not all existence be a manifestation of the Absolute, the Unconditioned, the Unknowable behind all appearances? Said the Blessed One to *Anāthapindika*: "If by the Absolute is meant something out of

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\* Those who are not imbued with the true spirit of Buddhism often suppose that the Buddha did not deny the existence of a *Brahma*, as in some *Sutras* he speaks of the seeing of and talking with *Brahma*. Thus in the *Mahā Govinda Sutta* the Blessed One says: "He who goes into solitude for four months in a year and practises the *karuṇa bhāvana* sees *Brahma*, converses with him, talks with him." Similarly in the *Tevijja Sutta*, the Buddha says: "The *bhikṣu* who is free from anger and malice, pure in mind and master of himself, becomes united with *Brahma*—who is the same." In these discourses the Great Teacher merely utilized the ordinary opinions and beliefs (*samvṛti satya*) of the people of his day to direct their attention to the genuine truth (*paramārtha satya*). The *Brahmins* at the time of the Buddha believed in seeing *Brahma* and conversing with him and regarded the union with him as the *summum bonum*. Hence by a Socratic method the Buddha endeavoured to elucidate the genuine truth underlying the popular belief, namely, the practice of the different *pāramitās*. Similarly, those portions of the *Tripitakas* which deal with the origin of the worlds, the existence of worlds of happiness and worlds of misery, the existence of gods and goddesses, merely relate to popularly accepted views and have nothing to do with the essence of Buddhism.

relation to all known things, its existence cannot be established by any reasoning (*hetuvidyasāstra*). How can we know that any thing unrelated to other things exists at all? The whole universe, as we know it, is a system of relations; we know nothing that is, or can be, unrelated. How can that which depends on nothing and is related to nothing, produce things which are related to one another and depend for their existence upon one another? Again, the Absolute is one or many. If it be only one, how can it be the cause of the different things which originate, as we know, from different causes? If there be as many different Absolutes as there are things, how can the latter be related to one another? If the Absolute pervades all things and fills all space, then it cannot also make them, for there is nothing to make. Further, if the Absolute is devoid of all qualities (*nirguṇa*), all things arising from it ought likewise to be devoid of qualities. But in reality all things in the world are circumscribed throughout by qualities. Hence the Absolute cannot be their cause. If the Absolute be considered to be different from the qualities, how does it continually create the things possessing such qualities and manifest itself in them? Again, if the Absolute be unchangeable, all things should be unchangeable too, for the effect cannot differ in nature from the cause. But all things in the world undergo change and decay. How then can the Absolute be unchangeable? Moreover, if the Absolute which pervades all is the cause of everything, why should we seek liberation? For we ourselves possess this Absolute and must patiently endure every suffering and sorrow incessantly created by the Absolute." (Asvaghosha's *Buddhacharita*).

All the six orthodox systems of Hindu philosophy, namely, the Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsa, and Vedānta, maintain the existence of some form of Absolute, some permanent reality (*sāsvata*) on which stands the whole fabric of the world. The Sāṅkhya and Yoga maintain that *prakṛiti* or *pradhānam* is the permanent reality in the external world, while the different *puruṣhas* (souls) are the eternal realities in the internal world. In laying stress on the causal enchainment of the phenomena of life the Sāṅkhya agrees with the Dharma, but differs from it in accepting the existence of an Absolute and an infinity of autonomous beings (*puruṣhas*). The Dharma is free from all forms of animism. Further, the Sāṅkhya teaches that evolution takes place in view of the liberation of *puruṣhas* from *prakṛiti*, whereas the Dharma regards *samsāra* as eternal and can assign no aim to

the flux of all things.\* The Nyāya and Vaiseshika hold that material atoms, *ākāś*, space and time are the permanent entities in the external world, while the souls are the eternal realities in the internal world. The Vedānta affirms that the one eternal Absolute in the external as well as the internal world is the all-pervading being *brahman*, whose existence cannot be proved by inferential reasoning but must be accepted solely on the authority of scripture. The Buddhist denies the existence of all Absolutes, but he does not deny the existence of the internal or external world. For him the world is an aggregate of conditions or relations, which are themselves not self-existent, but interdependent. Only when conceived in its totality has the world any meaning.

The Absolute owes its origin to the erroneous assumption that every concept has a distinct counterpart in reality, and that the higher or more comprehensive concepts exist prior to the lower or less comprehensive ones, and contain the latter by implication. A simple reference to the process of formation of concepts reveals the absurdity of this assumption. In our experience there is nothing more original than sensation. What we speak of as reality is connected with sensation. We know that sensations arise, but we can form no idea of how they arise, as every idea has sensations for its content and its presupposition. A primary datum of sensation is the consciousness of difference. Without this no act of sensation would even be possible. The recognition of identity amidst difference is the basis of all ratiocinative or discursive thought. While we perceive objects as different, we conceive them as identical by directing our attention to their points of agreement. Thus objects are classified into groups, those attributes which belong to the objects in common serving as the basis of classification. When the number of objects to be classified is large, and some of them have more attributes in common than others, they are arranged in a number of groups. First, all those objects which have the greatest number of attributes in common, are grouped so as to form what is called a species; the different species are then grouped together in a higher class or genus, which has only a small number of common attributes, and so forth. The totality of attributes pertaining to a class is called a concept. Thus out of complexes of sensations which constitute reality we build up in thought our concepts. By the omission or

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\* Kapila's teaching about *mahat*, *ahankāra*, *tanmātra*, *vikāra*, *satva*, *rajas*, *tamas*, *buddhindriya*, etc., have nothing to do with Buddhism.



rejection of the differentiating attributes, and by the ideal conjunction of the common characters, we form the higher, or more comprehensive concepts from the lower, or less comprehensive ones. In this process of abstraction we find nothing from which we may infer that the rejected attributes are contained or implied in those that are retained and combined to form the higher concepts. It is this error of regarding the higher concepts as giving birth to the lower ones, coupled with the fancy that the highest concepts, such as being, existence, substance, matter, energy, consciousness, which represent the attributes common to all things, form the invariable substrata of the variable characters by which things are distinguished from one another, that has been the prolific mother of metaphysical speculation concerning the unknown. For subjective reasons man is often inclined to over-estimate the value of the unknown and prefer it to the known. His practical dissatisfaction with the reality, that is to say, the sense-world, has inspired him to seek satisfaction in a metaphysical, supersensible phantasm. Out of what is abstracted from sense experience, by a fanciful concatenation of words, the metaphysician constructs what he fancies to be a transcendental existence. And feeling himself unable to clutch his fanciful creation, the metaphysician employs fantastic means to realise his vain hopes.

In different ages and climes different methods have been employed to get into touch with what is called the transcendental or supernatural. These methods may be roughly grouped into three principal classes. The first class comprises all those cases in which some supernatural being, whether it be Igvara, his messenger, or some angel, or demon, appears before the favoured person, and reveals directly by visible signs or articulate sounds, what he was elected to reveal. In the second are included those cases in which an individual is mysteriously possessed and overpowered by some supernatural agent, who makes revelations through the obsessed individual. The chief feature of the third class is the condition of trance or ecstasy in which the subject, withdrawn from things of sense, enters into direct connection with the deity, or other spiritual agencies, or the Absolute, and discerns the truths of a transcendental world which is inaccessible to the ordinary means of apprehension by the senses and the understanding. For the cultured man of modern civilised countries the first two methods appear too crude for acceptance. But the third method, that of ecstatic intuition, still finds favour with

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many, and in recent times attempts have even been made to prop it up by some new psychological discoveries, and as such it deserves greater consideration. However, before entering on an examination of the nature of ecstatic intuition, we shall just repeat the general warning of John Stuart Mill concerning the possibility of discerning truths by abnormal methods. "The notion that truths external to the mind," says J.S. Mill, "may be known by intuition or consciousness, independently of observation and experience is, I am persuaded, in these times the great intellectual support of false doctrines and bad institutions. By the aid of this theory every inveterate belief and every intense feeling, of which the origin is not remembered, is enabled to dispense with the obligation of justifying itself by reason, and is erected into its own all-efficient voucher and justification. There never was a better instrument devised for consecrating all deep-seated prejudices."

In ecstatic intuition there is an abstraction of the mind from the body in order to enter into direct communication with *Iqvara*, or to overcome the limitations of individuality to become one with *Brahmam* or the Absolute. The method ordinarily employed is as follows: By means of prolonged and intense concentration, often assisted by fixing the gaze on a particular object, thought is made to flow along one definite channel (*ekāgrata*), and the mind is thus thrown into a condition in which there is a breaking up and disintegration of the normal consciousness, sense and reason are suspended, and that complex of somatic feelings, which the needs of the daily life keep submerged, rise to fill the focus of consciousness, making it acutely pleasurable or painful. About these somatic sensations there seems to gyrate in the first stage of ecstasy a fringe of auditory or visual elements combined in various ways. These may subside in the second stage and their place may be taken by a vivid sense of some 'presence'; or they may become so dominated by one or more exceedingly intense auditory or visual hallucinations coupled with alternations of fear and elation that the whole complex may be defined by them. In all these the psychologist recognises nothing more than the temporary shattering of the whole laborious machinery of perception, in which life is reduced to its almost rudimentary proto-plasmic state. This interruption of the organised routine of the daily life is regarded as religious experience, and the loss of individual consciousness is felt as an absorption into the infinite, and truths, unattainable by discursive reason, are perceived by

immediate intuition. The condition of the organism in this case does not essentially differ from what it is in morbid states, such as may be caused by drugs, disease, physical fear, or great emotional strain. In all these cases the subject is beside himself, and the outward and visible characters are the same. If a naturalistic explanation is sufficient for morbid states, it must be equally suitable for ecstatic intuition. Nevertheless, ecstatic intuition is ascribed to the entrance of higher spiritual agencies into a "subliminal self," while the morbid states are regarded as the result of the play of secondary consciousness. Of the existence of secondary consciousness, that is, of an organised system of conditions formed in and through bygone conscious experience, which, though not themselves present to consciousness, determine the onward flow of thought in every moment of its course, there need be no doubt. It is but a stream of mental process of the same order as that of our normal conscious life, but separated from, and more or less independent of it. It pre-supposes no other source of material for psychic evolution than earthly experience, and no laws of mental process other than those recognised by ordinary psychology. But what warrant is there for believing in a "subliminal self," which exists independently of psychical phenomena and serves as the medium of communication with spiritual agencies? Granted that telepathy, clairvoyance and so forth do really occur, does it follow that the mental life in each one of us can be split into two primarily distinct and discontinuous streams of personal consciousness, one mainly connected with a mundane, and the other with an extramundane, environment? As Prof. Hugo Munsterberg says, "metaphysical dreams and doubtful speculations cannot help us, when we seek convictions on which we are to base all that is valuable in our life. The more we separate our life of idealistic belief from the practical reality between morning and evening, the more do we deprive our daily life of its inner dignity and force it to the superficial hopes of an external hereafter."

It is claimed that ecstasy and other so-called mystical states of consciousness possess "the right to be absolutely authoritative over the individuals to whom they come," and that as such they not only "break down the authority of the rationalistic consciousness" based solely upon the understanding of the senses, but also show the latter to be only one kind of consciousness, opening out the possibility of other orders of truth. No one will deny the absolute authority over the subject of what is merely given,

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namely, visions, voices, entrancing feelings, and volitional attitudes. Nor need we contradict the mystic when he speaks of elation, of freedom, of illumination, of union, or of the increased moral courage and vigour resulting from the so-called higher mystical states. On the merely subjective side these experiences of the mystic are invulnerable and absolute, and as such they are not amenable to any criticism. But considered from the point of view of causal relations the matter becomes different. When the ecstatic ascribes his experiences to the descent of a deity into him, or to the existence of a world of spiritual beings, he is going beyond what is merely felt into the field of rationalistic elaboration. He is no longer in the region of the mystic consciousness, but has trespassed into the domain of rational consciousness, and therefore becomes amenable to the criticism of the latter. Moreover, the subjective character of the experiences of all mystics inevitably vitiates them. No one can feel sure, not even the participant himself, that the transcendental or supernatural element in it is objective reality and not subjective illusion. Nor can the mystic demand from others an absolute and unwavering faith in the intuition of his ecstatic feeling. At best he can speak for himself only. A suspicion must naturally attach itself to a form of experience which can equally establish every view of the supernatural. As Professor James points out, the mystical feeling is "capable of forming matrimonial alliances with material furnished by the most diverse philosophies and theologies, provided only they can find a place in their framework for its peculiar emotional need." This inconsistent character of the knowledge claimed refutes of itself the claims of the ecstatic to immediate insight. Besides, in all kinds of ecstasy there is a withdrawal of the individual entirely as a conscious, and, to a large extent, as an active being, from his external life of relation. His consciousness is absorbed, so to speak, in a purely internal strain of activity, which is comparable to nothing in normal experience, and is therefore incapable of being recalled to memory when he returns to his life of relation. It is no wonder that he regards what appears so much outside the range of normal experience as beyond the compass of thought and speech (*avāṅ mānasa gocharam*). No wonder, too, that its rapture seems to him a foretaste of that final beatitude which consists in the absorption of self in the Absolute! But what can be the logical outcome of this? In plain language the so-called consciousness or super-consciousness

(*sakshātkāra* or *samyagdarsana*) appertaining to the supreme goal of all mystics can be nothing else than absolute unconsciousness.

If the world is neither the creation of *Īvara* nor the manifestation of the Absolute (*brahman*), may it not be a product of the individual self? Without entering on the question of the reality of the self the Blessed One has shown the absurdity of regarding the self as the maker of the world as follows: "If you say that the self is the maker, then the self should make all things pleasant. But there are many things in this world not pleasing to one's self; how then could it be asserted that the self is the maker? If it be said that the self does not wish to make things pleasant, then he who wishes for things pleasant is opposed to his self, the maker. Sorrow and joy are not self-existing. How could it be said that they are made by the self? If we admit that the self is the maker, there should, at least, be no evil *karma*, but, as is well known, our deeds produce good and evil results. Hence the self cannot be the maker. Perhaps it might be said that the self is the maker according to the occasion, but then the occasion ought to be for good alone. Still, as good and evil both result from cause, it cannot be that the self has made it so." (Asvaghosha's *Buddhacharita*).

The view here refuted has its origin in the fact that the appearance of things is influenced by the condition of the sensory organs of the percipient. To the jaundiced eye everything looks yellow. This fact is well-known to the naïve man, but it never occurs to him to regard the whole world as a creation of his senses. Even the metaphysician, who believes himself a solipsist, is never such in practical life. He does not attempt to cloy the hungry edge of his appetite by the bare imagination of a feast. Why should the mind be unable to unmake what it made? If things were really made by the mind, there could not be this divergence between theory and practice. Indeed there ought to be no misery at all in this world. Rightly has the Blessed One laid stress on this point in discarding the absurd view of the idealist.

From these negative criticisms we may now turn to consider the exact position of the Blessed One in relation to the fundamental problems of philosophy. As the Blessed One incessantly laid stress on the ethical life, it is generally supposed that he was indifferent to all epistemological questions. It is indeed true that the Buddha has propounded no hypothesis concerning the origin and end of things; nor has he given a systematic shape to his views. But from what we find in the *Sūtrapīṭaka* and the

Abhidharmapiṭaka, it is not difficult to see clearly his exact position. The Blessed One always spoke in a manner suited to the capacities of his hearers. In his discourses to the ordinary man he naturally appears to be a realist (*sarvāstivādin*). On the basis of such discourses the Vaibhāṣikās and the Sautrāntikās have erected a materialistic system of their own, and are adherents of some form of the atomic theory. It is not unlikely that, as Dr. Handt maintains in his *Die Atomistische Grundlage der Vaisesika philosophie*, the Buddhists were the originators of the atomic theory. Starting from the fundamental view common to all shades of Buddhism that *samsāra* is a continual springing into existence and perishing, no wonder that some Buddhists regard the whole world as an aggregate of non-eternal atoms, just as the spiritual one is produced by the aggregate of the five *skandas*. Both the Vaibhāṣikās and the Sautrāntikās accept the existence of an extra-psychic outside world; the former maintaining that external things are directly perceived, and the latter that our perceptions are only reflections in the mind of the things outside and therefore the outside world can only be inferred.

On the other hand, the Yogachārās, the followers of Asanga, form a class of subjective idealists (*vijñānāstīmātravādin*), denying altogether the reality of the external world and regarding it as the creation of a self-subsisting consciousness (*ālayavignāna*).\* The Blessed One might indeed have given some room for the development of these schools of thought, but he himself never propounded these views. He was neither a materialist who tried to evolve consciousness out of the motions of self-existing physical atoms, nor was he a solipsist who regarded the world as the product of the activity of self-subsisting spirits. He was a *mādhyamika* in thought as well as in life. He steered a middle course. He denied the reality neither of the mind nor of the external world. But he denied the existence of all transcendental substrata, all things in themselves, both *jīvātma* and *paramātma*. He was therefore generally called a *ṣuṇyavādin*. But he never denied the phenomenal world (*prapañcha*) nor the empirical ego (*nāmarūpa*). He taught a consistent incontrovertible phenomenalism (*advayavāda*)† so much so that the title of *advayavādiḥ* has been specially given to him.

\* See Asanga-Mahāyana-Sūtrālamkāra par Sylvain Levi, Vol. II, p. 20.

† The *advayavāda* of the Buddha should not be confounded with the *advaita* of Sankara. The former is essentially a phenomenalism, whereas the latter is a substantialism, which finds its ultimate ground in Brahman. Though there can be

One of the few points on which all philosophers of the present day are agreed is that all that one experiences is given to him only as a content of one's consciousness. What is not presented as a content of one's consciousness is entirely outside the range of one's knowledge. Though the content of one's consciousness varies from moment to moment, the certainty of the momentary content is so direct that it can not with any reason be called in question. Though the content of one's consciousness may be valid only for one and only at the moment when it is present, still it may be rendered serviceable for all time and also to others by making known the conditions in which its validity holds. But it must never be forgotten that all that one can know is psychic. Psychic, being conscious, existing—all mean one and the same thing. *Esse is percipi*. There can be no such thing as extrapsychic or metapsychic. All phenomena exist in consciousness. As all substances and forces are phenomena, we cannot speak of consciousness as a substance or a force. It is the reality in terms of which everything else has to be interpreted. It is *tathāta*, the suchness of all things (*bhūta*). The neglect of this fundamental fact has given rise to all sorts of supposititious problems about self-subsisting unknowable things, foreign to one's consciousness but working on it.

Every content of consciousness of whatever kind it may be has the character of uniqueness. No two contents of consciousness are exactly alike. But memory, which forms a fundamental phenomenon of consciousness, enables us to place these diverse contents in relation to one another and note their similarities and differences. We are thus able to analyse the contents of consciousness into certain elements out of which all experience may be regarded as built up. But what is primarily given in consciousness at any moment is the whole content and not these elements. We obtain these elements by a process of abstraction. These elements are the sense impressions and their memory images. As empirical psychology teaches, all other psychical contents may be built up out of them.

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no doubt that the *Gaudapādakārika* has borrowed a great deal from the teachings of the Buddhist patriarch Nāgārjuna, yet the essential tenets of the *advaita* system of thought, such as the five *koṣas*, the three *sarīras*, the *sachchidānanda Brahman*, the *Jivātma*, the absorption of the *Jivātma* into *Brahman*, are all quite foreign to Buddhism.

† See *Amarakoṣa*.

The ordinary man believes that sense impressions are produced by a real thing outside consciousness, and that an internal "I" has these sense impressions. The "thing" and the "I" are both inferences and are not originally given. In so far as they are evolved out of the memory images of many different sense impressions, they may be spoken of as complex ideas, and as such they are certainly real. But as substrates, the former external to consciousness and the latter as the vehicle or bearer of consciousness, they have no existence. The distinction between body and qualities is a matter of convenience for practical life, but it does not correspond to any perception, to any observation. A body is only an ensemble, a group of qualities. If the qualities seem incapable of existing by themselves and need a substrate for their support, it is a difficulty arising from the ordinary usage of language. In the course of his development man has formed to himself a crude mechanical representation of the relationship between the different sensations which together constitute a body. Certain sensations, which appear to be more firmly connected with a body, have become the support of other sensations less firmly connected with it. The conception which we possess of the stability of a body and of the persistence of its identity notwithstanding certain superficial changes accounts for our belief in a substance, that is to say, in an unchangeable substrate. But we arrive at the same result without this useless hypothesis. The identity of a body consists in the sameness of its qualities, comprised in the name which it bears. If the majority of its qualities, and especially of those properties which are the most important for us, subsist without any alteration, or if the alteration, though very great, is made insensibly in small gradations, the residuum is regarded as still the same. We have no need to posit an indestructible substrate.

If all that we experience consists exclusively of processes that occur in our consciousness, is there then no essential difference between outer and inner? Yes; as contents of consciousness there is no intrinsic difference between them. As W. K. Clifford puts it, "my feelings arrange and order themselves in two distinct ways. There is the internal or subjective order, in which sorrow succeeds the hearing of bad news, or the abstraction "dog" symbolizes the perception of many different dogs. And there is the external or objective order, in which the sensation of letting go is followed by the sight of a falling object and the sound of its fall. The objective order, *qua* order, is treated by physical science,



which investigates the uniform relations of objects in time and space. Here the word *object* (or *phenomenon*) is taken merely to mean a group of my feelings, which persists as a group in a certain manner ; for I am at present considering only the objective order of my feelings. The object, then, is a set of changes in my consciousness and not anything out of it. . . . The inferences of physical science are all inferences of my real or possible feelings, inferences of something actually or potentially in my consciousness, not anything outside it." As the Sutta Nipata says, "*nāthi ajjhātaṃ cha bahiddhā cha kinchitthaṃ passato*. For him who has understood the truth there is neither external nor internal."

The distinction between inside and outside, between the "I" and "the external world," has a practical origin. To understand clearly the practical difference between inner experience and outer experience, let us consider an example. For instance, we take a needle. Certain sense impressions relating to colour and form associated with images of past sense impressions constitute for us the reality of the needle. Ordinarily we suppose these to reside in a thing outside. But when our finger is pricked by the needle and an unpleasant sense impression is produced, the pain is supposed to be inside. Yet the colour and form of the needle are as much contents of consciousness as the pain produced by the prick. To what then is this difference due ? The experience of pleasure and pain (*vedana*) gives birth to a cleaving (*upādāna*), and this leads to the formation (*bhava*) of the idea of a centre of consciousness, an ego, to whose enjoyment all experience is directed. Thus arises the difference between one part of the content of consciousness as the enjoyer and the rest as being outside him and ministering to his pleasure. But when one pursues the Noble Eightfold Path and his prejudiced attachment to pleasure is destroyed, he understands the true nature of all things, and enters the blissful temple of Nirvāṇa,

"A temple neither Pagod, Mosque, nor Church,  
But loftier, simpler, always open-doored,  
To every breath from heaven, where Truth and Peace,  
And Love and Pity dwell for ever and aye."